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from this fatal castle, or in a few moments I may be made miserable for ever. Alas! said the stranger, what can I do to assist you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the castle, and want—Oh! said Isabella, hastily interrupting him, help me but to find a trap-door that must be hereabout, and it is the greatest service you can do me, for I have not a minute to lose. Saying these words, she felt about on the pavement, and directed the stranger to search likewise for a smooth piece of brass enclosed in one of the stones.—That, said she, is the lock, which opens with a spring, of which I know the secret. If we can find that, I may escape; if not, alas! courteous stranger, I fear I shall have involved you in my misfortunes: Manfred will suspect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his resentment.—I value not my life, said the stranger, and it will be some comfort to lose it, in trying to deliver you from his tyranny.—Generous youth! said Isabella, how shall I ever requite—As she uttered these words, a ray of moonshine streaming through a cranny of the ruin above, shone directly on the lock they sought.—Oh! transport! said Isabella! here is the trap-door! and taking out the key, she touched the spring, which starting aside, discovered an iron ring. Lift up the door, said the princess. The stranger obeyed; and beneath appeared some stone steps descending into a vault totally dark. We must go down here, said Isabella: follow me; dark and dismal as it is, we cannot miss our way; it leads directly to the church of St. Nicholas—but perhaps, added the princess modestly, you have no reason to leave the castle, nor have I farther occasion for your service; in a few minutes I shall be safe from Manfred's rage—only let me know to whom I am so much obliged.—I will never quit you, said the stranger eagerly, until I have placed you in safety—nor think me, princess, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care.—The stranger was interrupted by a sudden noise of voices that seemed approaching, and they soon distinguished these words: Talk not to me of necromancers: I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment.—Oh! heavens, cried Isabella, it is the voice of Manfred! make haste or we are ruined! and shut the trap-door after you.—Saying this, she descended the steps precipitately; and as the stranger hastened to follow her, he let the door slip out of his hands: it fell, and the spring closed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having observed Isabella's method of touching the spring; nor had he many moments to make an essay. The noise of the falling door had been heard by Manfred, who, directed by the sound, hastened thither, attended by his servants with torches. It must be Isabella, cried Manfred, before he entered the vault; she is escaping by the subterranean passage, but she cannot have got far.—What was the astonishment of the prince, when, instead of Isabella, the light of the torches discovered to him the young peasant, whom he thought confined under the fatal helmet! Traitor! said Manfred, how camest thou here? I thought thee in durance above in the court.—I am no traitor, replied the young man boldly, nor am I answerable for your thoughts.—Presumptuous villain! cried Manfred, dost thou provoke my wrath? tell me; how hast thou escaped from above? thou hast corrupted thy guards, and their lives shall answer it.—My poverty, said the peasant calmly, will discomfit them: though the ministers of a tyrant's wrath, to thee they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which you unjustly imposed upon them.—Art thou so hardy as to dare my vengeance? said the prince—but tortures shall force the truth from thee. Tell me, I will know thy accomplices.—There was my accomplice! said the youth, smiling, and pointing to the roof. Manfred ordered the torches to be held up, and perceived that one of the cheeks of the enchanted casque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his servants had let it fall over the peasant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap through which the peasant had pressed himself some minutes before he was found by Isabella. Was that the way by which thou didst descend? said Manfred. It was, said the youth. But what noise was that, said Manfred, which I heard as I entered the cloister? A door clapped, said the peasant; I heard it as well as you. What door? said Manfred hastily. I am not acquainted with your castle, said the peasant: this is the first time I ever entered it; and this vault the only part of it within which I ever was.—But I tell thee, said Manfred (wishing to find out if the youth had discovered the trap-door), it was this way I heard the noise: my servants heard it too.—My lord, interrupted one of them officiously, to be sure it was the trap-door, and he was going to make his escape.—Peace! blockhead, said the prince angrily; if he was going to escape, how should he come on this side? I will know from his own mouth what noise it was I heard. Tell me truly; thy life depends on thy veracity.—My veracity is dearer to me than my life, said the peasant; nor would I purchase the one by forfeiting the other.—Indeed! young philosopher! said Manfred contemptuously; tell me then, what was the noise I heard?—Ask me what I can answer, said he, and put me to death instantly if I tell you a lie. Manfred growing impatient at the steady valor and in-

difference of the youth, cried, Well then, thou man of truth! answer; was it the fall of the trap-door that I heard?—It was, said the youth.—It was! said the prince; and how didst thou come to know there was a trap-door here?—I saw the plate of brass by a gleam of moonshine, replied he.—But what told thee it was a lock? said Manfred; how didst thou discover the secret of opening it?—Providence, that delivered me from the helmet, was able to direct me to the spring of a lock, said he.—Providence should have gone a little farther, and have placed thee out of the reach of my resentment, said Manfred: when Providence had taught thee to open the lock, it abandoned thee for a fool, who did not know how to make use of its favors. Why didst thou not pursue the path pointed out for thy escape? Why didst thou shut the trap-door before thou hadst descended the steps?—I might ask you, my lord, said the peasant, how I, totally unacquainted with your castle, was to know that those steps led to any outlet? but I scorn to evade your questions. Wherever those steps led to, perhaps I should have explored the way—I could not be in a worse situation than I was. But the truth is, I let the trap-door fall: your immediate arrival followed. I had given the alarm—what imported it to me whether I was seized a minute sooner or a minute later?—Thou art a resolute villain for thy years, said Manfred; yet, on reflection, I suspect thou dost but trifle with me: thou hast not yet told me how thou didst open the lock.—That I will show you, my lord, said the peasant; and, taking up a fragment of stone that had fallen from above, he laid himself on the trap-door, and began to beat on the piece of brass that covered it; meaning to gain time for the escape of the princess. This presence of mind, joined to the frankness of the youth, staggered Manfred. He even felt a disposition towards pardoning one who had been guilty of no crime. Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanted in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason.

While the prince was in this suspense, a confused noise of voices echoed through the distant vaults. As the sound approached, he distinguished the clamors of some of his domestics, whom he had dispersed through the castle in search of Isabella, calling out, Where is my Lord? where is the prince?—Here I am, said Manfred, as they came nearer; have you found the princess? The first that arrived replied, Oh! my lord! I am glad we have found you.—Found me! said Manfred; have you found the princess?—We thought we had, my lord, said the fellow, looking terrified—but—But what? cried the prince; has she escaped?—Jaques and I, my lord—Yes, I and Diego, interrupted the second, who came up in still greater consternation.—Speak one of you at a time, said Manfred; I ask you, where is the princess?—We do not know, said they both together; but we are frightened out of our wits.—So I think, blockheads, said Manfred; what is it has scared you thus?—Oh! my lord, said Jaques, Diego has seen such a sight! your highness would not believe your eyes.—What new absurdity is this? cried Manfred; give me a direct answer, or, by heaven—Why, my lord, if it please your highness to hear me, said the poor fellow: Diego and I—Yes, I and Jaques, cried his comrade.—Did not I forbid you to speak both at a time? said the prince: you, Jaques, answer; for the other fool seems more distracted than thou art; what is the matter?—My gracious lord, said Jaques, if it please your highness to hear me; Diego and I, according to your highness's orders, went to search for the young lady; but being apprehensive that we might meet the ghost of my young lord, your highness's son, God rest his soul! as he has not received Christian burial—Sot! cried Manfred in a rage, is it only a ghost then that thou hast seen?—Oh! worse! worse! my lord, cried Diego: I had rather have seen ten whole ghosts.—Grant me patience! said Manfred; those blockheads distract me. Out of my sight, Diego! and thou, Jaques, tell me in one word, art thou sober? art thou raving? thou wast wont to have some sense: has the other sot frightened himself and thee too? speak; what is it he fancies he has seen?—Why, my lord, replied Jaques trembling, I was going to tell your highness, that since the calamitous misfortune of my young lord, God rest his precious soul! not one of us, your highness's faithful servants, indeed we are, my lord, though poor men; I say, not one of us has dared to set a foot about the castle, but two together: so Diego and I, thinking that my young lady might be in the great gallery, went up there to look for her, and tell her your highness wanted something to impart to her—O blundering fools! cried Manfred: and in the mean time she has made her escape, because you were afraid of goblins! Why, thou knave! she left me in the gallery; I came from thence myself.—For all that she may be there still for aught I know, said Jaques; but the devil shall have me before I seek her there again: poor Diego! I do not believe he will ever recover it!—Recover what? said Manfred; am I never to learn what it is that terrified these rascals?—but I lose my time: follow me, slave; I will see if she is in the gallery.—For heaven's sake, my dear good lord, cried Jaques, do not go to the gallery! Sa-

tan himself I believe is in the chamber next to the gallery.—Manfred, who hitherto had treated the terror of his servants as an idle panic, was struck at this new circumstance. He recollected the apparition of the portrait, and the sudden closing of the door at the end of the gallery—his voice faltered, and he asked with disorder, What is in the great chamber?—My lord, said Jaques, when Diego and I came into the gallery, he went first, for he said he had more courage than I. So when we came into the gallery we found nobody. We looked under every bench and stool; and still we found nobody.—Were all the pictures in their places? said Manfred. Yes, my lord, answered Jaques: but we did not think of looking behind them.—Well, well! said Manfred, proceed.—When we came to the door of the great chamber, continued Jaques, we found it shut—And could not you open it? said Manfred.—Oh! yes, my lord; would to heaven we had not! replied he: nay, it was not I neither, it was Diego: he was grown fool-hardy, and would go on, though I advised him not: if ever I open a door that is shut, again—Trifle not, said Manfred, shuddering, but tell me what you saw in the great chamber on opening the door.—I! my lord! said Jaques, I saw nothing; I was behind Diego—but I heard the noise.—Jaques, said Manfred, in a solemn tone of voice; tell me, I adjure thee by the soul of my ancestors, what was it thou sawest? what was it thou hearest?—It was Diego saw it, my lord, it was not I, replied Jaques; I only heard the noise. Diego had no sooner opened the door, than he cried out, and ran back—I ran back too, and said, Is it the ghost? The ghost! no no, said Diego, and his hair stood an end—it is a giant, I believe: he is all clad in armor, for I saw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet below in the court. As he said these words, my lord, we heard a violent motion, and the rattling of armor, as if the giant was rising, for Diego has told me since, that he believes the giant was lying down, for the foot and leg were stretched at length on the floor. Before we could get to the end of the gallery, we heard the door of the great chamber clap behind us, but we did not dare turn back to see if the giant was following us—yet now I think on it, we must have heard him if he had pursued us—but for heaven's sake, good my lord, send for the chaplain, and have the castle exorcised, for, for certain, it is enchanted.—Ay, pray do, my lord, cried all the servants at once, or we must leave your highness's service.—Peace! dotards! said Manfred, and follow me; I will know what all this means.—We! my lord? cried they with one voice, we would not go up to the gallery for your highness's revenue. The young peasant, who had stood silent, now spoke. Will your highness, said he, permit me to try this adventure? my life is of consequence to nobody: I fear no bad angel, and have offended no good one.—Your behavior is above your seeming, said Manfred, viewing him with surprise and admiration: hereafter I will reward your bravery—but now, continued he with a sigh, I am so circumstanced, that I dare trust no eyes but my own—however, I give you leave to accompany me.

Manfred, when he first followed Isabella from the gallery, had gone directly to the apartment of his wife, concluding the princess had retired thither. Hippolita, who knew his step, rose with anxious fondness to meet her lord, whom she had not seen since the death of their son. She would have flown in a transport mixed of joy and grief to his bosom, but he pushed her rudely off, and said, Where is Isabella?—Isabella! my lord! said the astonished Hippolita.—Yes! Isabella, cried Manfred imperiously; I want Isabella.—My lord, replied Matilda, who perceived how much his behavior had shocked her mother, she has not been with us since your highness summoned her to your apartment.—Tell me where she is, said the prince; I do not want to know where she has been.—My good lord, says Hippolita, your daughter tells you the truth: Isabella left us by your command, and has not returned since—but, my good lord, compose yourself: retire to your rest; this dismal day has disordered you. Isabella shall wait your orders in the morning.—What then, you know where she is? cried Manfred: tell me directly, for I will not lose an instant—and you, woman, speaking to his wife, order your chaplain to attend me forthwith.—Isabella, said Hippolita calmly, is retired, I suppose to her chamber: she is not accustomed to watch at this late hour. Gracious my lord, continued she, let me know what has disturbed you? Has Isabella offended you?—Trouble me not with questions, said Manfred, but tell me where she is.—Matilda shall call her, said the princess.—Sit down, my lord, and resume your wonted fortitude.—What, art thou jealous of Isabella? replied he, that you wish to be present at our interview?—Good heavens! my lord, said Hippolita, what is it your highness means?—Thou wilt know ere many minutes are passed; said the cruel prince. Send your chaplain to me, and wait my pleasure here. At these words he flung out of the room in search of Isabella: leaving the amazed ladies thunderstruck with his words and frantic deportment, and lost in vain conjectures on what he was meditating.

Manfred was now returning from the vault, attended by the peasant and a few of his servants, whom he had obliged to accompany him. He ascended the staircase without stopping, till he arrived at the gallery, at the door of which he

met Hippolita and her chaplain. When Diego had been dismissed by Manfred, he had gone directly to the princess's apartment with the alarm of what he had seen. That excellent lady, who no more than Manfred doubted of the reality of the vision, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the servant. Willing, however, to save her lord from any additional shock, and prepared by a series of grief not to tremble at any accession to it, she determined to make herself the first sacrifice, if fate had marked the present hour for their destruction. Dismissing the reluctant Matilda to her rest, who in vain sued for leave to accompany her mother, and attended only by her chaplain, Hippolita had visited the gallery and great chamber; and now, with more serenity of soul than she had felt for many hours, she met her lord, and assured him that the vision of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and no doubt an impression made by fear, and the dark and dismal hour of the night, on the minds of his servants. She and the chaplain had examined the chamber, and found every thing in the usual order.

Manfred, though persuaded, like his wife, that the vision had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempest of mind into which so many strange events had thrown him. Ashamed too of his inhuman treatment of a princess, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty; he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes—but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage; he curbed the yearning of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villainy. Presuming on the unshaken submission of Hippolita, he flattered himself that he would not only acquiesce with patience to a divorce, but would obey, if it was his pleasure, in endeavoring to persuade Isabella to give him her hand—but ere he could indulge his horrid hope, he reflected that Isabella was not to be found. Coming to himself, he gave orders that every avenue to the castle should be strictly guarded, and charged his domestics on pain of their lives to suffer nobody to pass out. The young peasant, to whom he spoke favorably, he ordered to remain in a small chamber on the stairs, in which there was a pallet-bed, and the key of which he took away himself, telling the youth he would talk with him in the morning. Then dismissing his attendants, and bestowing a sullen kind of half-nod on Hippolita, he retired to his own chamber.

CHAP. II.

MATILDA, who by Hippolita's order had retired to her apartment, was ill disposed to take any rest. The shocking fate of her brother had deeply affected her. She was surprised at not seeing Isabella: but the strange words which had fallen from her father, and his obscure menace to the princess, his wife, accompanied by the most furious behavior, had filled her gentle mind with terror and alarm. She waited anxiously for the return of Bianca, a young damsel that attended her, whom she had sent to learn what was become of Isabella. Bianca soon appeared, and informed her mistress of what she had gathered from the servants, that Isabella was no where to be found. She related the adventure of the young peasant, who had been discovered in the vault, though with many simple additions from the incoherent accounts of the domestics; and she dwelled principally on the gigantic leg and foot which had been seen in the gallery-chamber. The last circumstance had terrified Bianca so much, that she was rejoiced when Matilda told her that she would not go to rest, but would watch till the princess should rise.

The young princess wearied herself in conjectures on the flight of Isabella, and on the threats of Manfred to her mother. But what business could he have so urgent with the chaplain? said Matilda. Does he intend to have my brother's body interred privately in the chapel?—Oh! Madam, said Bianca, now I guess. As you are become his heiress, he is impatient to have you married: he has always been raving for more sons; I warrant he is now impatient for grandsons. As sure as I live, Madam, I shall see you a bride at last—Good Madam, you won't cast off your faithful Bianca: you won't put Donna Rosara over me, now you are a great princess.—My poor Bianca, said Matilda, how fast your thoughts ramble! I a great princess! What hast thou seen in Manfred's behavior since my brother's death that bespeaks any increase of tenderness to me? No, Bianca; his heart was ever a stranger to me—but he is my father, and I must not complain. Nay, if heaven shuts my father's heart against me, it overpays my little merit in the tenderness of my mother—O that dear mother! yes, Bianca, 'tis there I feel the rugged temper of Manfred. I can support his harshness to me with patience; but it wounds my soul when I am witness to his causeless severity towards her.—Oh! Madam, said Bianca, all men use their wives so, when they are weary of them.—And yet you congratulated me but now, said Matilda, when you fancied my father intended to dispose of me!—I would have you a great lady, replied Bianca, come what will. I do not wish to see you moped in a convent, as you would be if you had your will, and if my lady, your mother, who knows that a bad husband is better than no husband at all, did not hinder you—Bless me! what noise is that? St. Nicholas forgive me! I was but in jest.—It is the wind, said Matilda, whistling through the battlements in the tower above: you have heard it a thousand times.—Nay, said Bianca, there was no harm neither in what I said: it is no sin to talk of matrimony—and so, Madam, as I was saying; if my Lord Manfred should offer you a handsome young prince for a bridegroom, you would drop him a curtsy, and tell him you would rather take the veil?—Thank heaven! I am in no such danger, said Matilda: you know how many proposals for me he has rejected—And you thank him like a dutiful daughter, do you Ma-

dam?—but come, Madam; suppose to-morrow morning he was to send for you to the great council-chamber, and there you should find at his elbow a lovely young prince, with large black eyes, a smooth white forehead, and manly curling locks like jet; in short, Madam, a young hero resembling the picture of the good Alfonso in the gallery, which you sit and gaze at for hours together—Do not speak lightly of that picture, interrupted Matilda sighing: I know the adoration with which I look at that picture is uncommon—but I am not in love with a colored panel. The character of that virtuous prince, the veneration with which my mother has inspired me for his memory, the orisons which I know not why she has enjoined me to pour forth at his tomb, all have concurred to persuade me that somehow or other my destiny is linked with something relating to him—Lord! Madam, how should that be? said Bianca; I have always heard that your family was no way related to his: and I am sure I cannot conceive why my lady, the princess, sends you in a cold morning or a damp evening to pray at his tomb: he is no saint by the almanack. If you must pray, why does she not bid you address yourself to our great St. Nicholas? I am sure he is the saint I pray to for a husband.—Perhaps my mind would be less affected, said Matilda, if my mother would explain her reasons to me: but it is the mystery she observes, that inspires me with this—I know not what to call it. As she never acts from caprice, I am sure there is some fatal secret at bottom—nay I know there is: in her agony of grief for my brother's death she dropped some words that intimated as much—Oh! dear Madam, cried Bianca, what were they?—No, said Matilda, if a parent lets fall a word, and wishes it recalled, it is not for a child to utter it.—What! was she sorry for what she had said? asked Bianca. I am sure, Madam, you may trust me.—With my own little secrets, when I have any, I may, said Matilda; but never with my mother's: a child ought to have no ears or eyes, but as a parent directs. Well! to be sure, Madam, you was born to be a saint, said Bianca, and there is no resisting one's vocation: you will end in a convent at last. But there is my lady Isabella would not be so reserved to me: She will let me talk to her of young men; and when a handsome cavalier has come to the castle, she had owned to me that she wished your brother Conrad resembled him.—Bianca, said the princess, I do not allow you to mention my friend disrespectfully. Isabella is of a cheerful disposition, but her soul is pure as virtue itself. She knows your idle babbling humor, and perhaps has now and then encouraged it, to divert melancholy, and enliven the solitude in which my father keeps us.—Blessed Mary! said Bianca starting, there it is again!—Dear Madam, do you hear nothing?—this castle is certainly haunted!—Peace! said Matilda, and listen! I did think I heard a voice—but it must be fancy! your terrors, I suppose, have infected me.—Indeed! indeed! Madam, said Bianca, half weeping with agony, I am sure I heard a voice.—Does any body lie in the chamber beneath? said the princess.—Nobody has dared to lie there, answered Bianca, since the great astrologer, that was your brother's tutor, drowned himself. For certain, Madam, his ghost and the young prince's are now met in the chamber below—for heaven's sake let us fly to your mother's apartment!—I charge you not to stir, said Matilda. If they are spirits in pain, we may ease their sufferings by questioning them. They can mean no hurt to us, for we have not injured them—and if they should, shall we be more safe in one chamber than in another? Reach me my beads; we will say a prayer, and then speak to them.—Oh! dear lady, I would not speak to a ghost for the world: cried Bianca—as she said those words, they heard the casement of the little chamber below Matilda's open. They listened attentively, and in a few minutes thought they heard a person sing, but could not distinguish the words. This can be no evil spirit, said the princess in a low voice, it is undoubtedly one of the family—open the window, and we shall know the voice.—I dare not indeed, Madam: said Bianca.—Thou art a very fool, said Matilda, opening the window gently herself. The noise the princess made was however heard by the person beneath, who stopped; and they concluded had heard the casement open. Is any body below? said the princess: if there is, speak.—Yes; said an unknown voice.—Who is it? said Matilda.—A stranger, replied the voice.—What stranger? said she; and how didst thou come there at this unusual hour, when all the gates of the castle are locked?—I am not here willingly, answered the voice—but pardon me, lady, if I have disturbed your rest: I knew not that I was overheard. Sleep had forsaken me: I left a restless couch, and came to waste the irksome hours with gazing on the fair casement of morning, impatient to be dismissed from this castle.—Thy words and accents, said Matilda, are of a melancholy cast: if thou art unhappy, I pity thee. If poverty afflicts thee, let me know it: I will mention thee to the princess, whose beneficent soul ever melts for the distressed; and she will relieve thee.—I am indeed unhappy, said the stranger; and I know not what wealth is: but I do not complain of the lot which Heaven has cast for me: I am young and healthy, and am not ashamed of owing my support to myself—yet think me not proud, or that I disdain your generous offers. I will remember you in my orisons, and will pray for blessings on your gracious self and your noble mistress—if I sigh, lady, it is for others, not for myself.—Now I have it, Madam, said Bianca, whispering the princess. This is certainly the young peasant; and by my conscience he is in love—well! this is a charming adventure!—do, Madam, let us sit him. He does not know you, but takes you for one of my lady Hippolita's women.—Art thou not ashamed, Bianca? said the princess: what right have we to pry into the secrets of this young man's heart? he seems virtuous and frank, and tells us he is unhappy: are those circumstances that authorize us to make a property of him? how are we entitled to his confidence?

—Lord! Madam, how little you know of love! replied Bianca: why lovers have no pleasure equal to talking of their mistresses.—And would you have me become a peasant's confidante? said the princess.—Well, then, let me talk to him; said Bianca: though I have the honor of being your highness's maid of honor, I was not always so great: besides, if love levels ranks, it raises them too: I have a respect for any young man in love.—Peace! simpleton! said the princess. Though he said he was unhappy, it does not follow that he must be in love. Think of all that has happened to-day, and tell me if there are no misfortunes but what love causes? Stranger, resumed the princess, if thy misfortunes have not been occasioned by thy own fault, and are within the compass of the Princess Hippolita's power to redress, I will take upon me to answer that she will be thy protectress. When thou art dismissed from this castle, repair to holy father Jerome at the convent adjoining to the church of St. Nicholas, and make thy story known to him, as far as thou thinkest meet: he will not fail to inform the princess, who is the mother of all that want her assistance. Farewell! It is not seemly for me to hold farther converse with a man at this unwonted hour.—May the saints guard thee, gracious lady! replied the peasant—but, oh! if a poor and worthless stranger might presume to beg a minute's audience farther—am I so happy?—the casement is it not shut—might I venture to ask—Speak quickly, said Matilda; the morning dawns apace: should the laborers come into the fields and perceive us—What wouldst thou ask?—I know not how—I know not if I dare—said the young stranger faltering—yet the humanity with which you have spoken to me emboldens—Lady! dare I trust you?—Heavens! said Matilda, what dost thou mean? with what wouldst thou trust me?—speak boldly, if thy secret is fit to be entrusted to a virtuous breast.—I would ask, said the peasant, recollecting himself, whether what I have heard from the domestics is true, that the princess is missing from the castle?—What imports it to thee to know? replied Matilda. Thy first words bespoke a prudent and becoming gravity. Dost thou come hither to pry into the secrets of Manfred?—Adieu. I have been mistaken in thee. Saying these words, she shut the casement hastily, without giving the young man time to reply. I had acted more wisely, said the princess to Bianca with some sharpness, if I had let thee converse with this peasant: his inquisitiveness seems of a piece with thy own.—It is not fit for me to argue with your highness, replied Bianca; but perhaps the questions I should have put to him, would have been more to the purpose, than those you have been pleased to ask him.—Oh! no doubt, said Matilda; you are a very discreet personage: may I know what you would have asked him?—A by-stander often sees more of the game than those that play, answered Bianca. Does your highness think, Madam, that his question about my lady Isabella was the result of mere curiosity? No, no, Madam; there is more in it than you great folks are aware of. Lopez told me that all the servants believe this young fellow contrived my lady Isabella's escape—now, pray Madam, observe—you and I both know that my lady Isabella never much admired the prince your brother.—Well! he is killed just in the critical minute—I accuse nobody. A helmet falls from the moon—so, my lord, your father says; but Lopez and all the servants say that this young spark is a magician, and stole it from Alfonso's tomb.—Have done with this rhapsody of impertinence, said Matilda.—Nay, Madam, as you please; cried Bianca—yet it is very curious thought, that my lady Isabella should be missing the very same day, and that this young sorcerer should be found at the mouth of the trap-door—I accuse nobody—but if my young lord came honestly by his death—Dare not, on thy duty, said Matilda, to breathe a suspicion on the purity of my dear Isabella's fame.—Purity, or not purity, said Bianca, gone she is—a stranger is found that nobody knows: you question him yourself: he tells you he is in love, or unhappy, it is the same thing—he; he owned he was unhappy about others; and is any body unhappy about another, unless they are in love with them? and at the very next word, he asks innocently, poor soul! if my lady Isabella is missing.—To be sure, said Matilda, thy observations are not totally without foundation—Isabella's flight amazes me: the curiosity of this stranger is very particular—yet Isabella never concealed a thought from me.—So she told you, said Bianca, to fish out our secrets—but who knows, Madam, but this stranger may be some prince in disguise?—do, Madam, let me open the window, and ask him a few questions.—No, replied Matilda, I will ask him myself, if he knows aught of Isabella: he is not worthy that I should converse farther with him. She was going to open the casement, when they heard the bell ring at the postern gate of the castle, which is on the right hand of the tower, where Matilda lay. This prevented the princess from renewing the conversation with the stranger.

After continuing silent for some time; I am persuaded, said she to Bianca, that whatever be the cause of Isabella's flight, it had no unworthy motive. If this stranger was accessory to it, she must be satisfied of his fidelity and worth. I observed, did not you, Bianca? that his words were tinged with an uncommon infusion of piety. It was no ruffian's speech: his phrases were becoming a man of gentle birth.—I told you, Madam, said Bianca, that I was sure he was some prince in disguise.—Yet, said Matilda, if he was privy to her escape, how will you account for his not accompanying her in her flight? why expose himself unnecessarily and rashly to my father's resentment?—As for that, Madam, replied she, if he could get from under the helmet, he will find ways of eluding your father's anger. I do not doubt but he had some talisman or other about him.—You resolve every thing into magic, said Matilda—but a man who has any intercourse with infernal spirits, does not dare to make

use of those tremendous and holy words, which he uttered. Didst thou not observe with what fervor he vowed to remember me to Heaven in his prayers?—yes, Isabella was undoubtedly convinced of his piety—Commed me to the piety of a young fellow and a damsel that consult to elope! said Bianca. No, no, Madam; my Lady Isabella is of another guess mould than you take her for. She used indeed to sigh and lift up her eyes in your company, because she knows you are a saint—but when your back was turned—You wrong her, said Matilda. Isabella is no hypocrite; She has a due sense of devotion, but never affected a call she has not. On the contrary, she always combated my inclination for the cloister: and though I own the mystery she has made to me of her flight confounds me; though it seems inconsistent with the friendship between us; I cannot forget the disinterested warmth with which she always opposed my taking the veil; she wished to see me married, though my dowry would have been a loss to her and my brother's children. For her sake I will believe well of this young peasant.—Then you do think there is some liking between them? said Bianca.—While she was speaking, a servant came hastily into the chamber, and told the princess, that the Lady Isabella was found. Where? said Matilda.—She has taken sanctuary in St. Nicholas's church, replied the servant: Father Jerome has heard the news himself: he is below with his highness.—Where is my mother? said Matilda.—She is in her own chamber, Madam, and has asked for you.

Manfred had risen at the first dawn of light, and gone to Hippolita's apartment, to inquire if she knew aught of Isabella. While he was questioning her, word was brought that Jerome demanded to speak with him. Manfred, little suspecting the cause of the friar's arrival, and knowing he was employed by Hippolita in her charities, ordered him to be admitted, intending to leave them together, while he pursued his search after Isabella. Is your business with me or the princess? said Manfred.—With both, replied the holy man.—The Lady Isabella.—What of her? interrupted Manfred eagerly.—Is at St. Nicholas's altar, replied Jerome.—That is no business of Hippolita, said Manfred with confusion: let us retire to my chamber, father; and inform me how she came thither.—No, my lord; replied the good man with an air of firmness and authority, that daunted even the resolute Manfred, who could not help revering the saint-like virtues of Jerome: my commission is to both; and with your highness's good-will, in the presence of both I shall deliver it—but first, my lord, I must interrogate the princess, whether she is acquainted with the cause of the Lady Isabella's retirement from your castle?—No, on my soul! said Hippolita; does Isabella charge me with being privy to it?—Father, interrupted Manfred, I pay due reverence to your holy profession; but I am sovereign here, and will allow no meddling priest to interfere in the affairs of my domestic. If you have aught to say, attend me to my chamber.—I do not use to let my wife be acquainted with the secret affairs of my state; they are not within a woman's province.—My lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your highness's uncharitable apostrophe; I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Harken to him who speaks through my organs. Manfred trembled with rage and shame. Hippolita's countenance declared her astonishment and impatience to know where this would end. Her silence more strongly spoke her observance of Manfred.

The Lady Isabella, resumed Jerome, commends herself to both your highnesses; she thanks both for the kindness with which she has been treated in your castle: she deplores the loss of your son, and her own misfortune in not becoming the daughter of such wise and noble persons, whom she shall always respect as parents: she prays for uninterrupted union and felicity between you (Manfred's color changed): but as it is no longer possible for her to be allied to you, she entreates your consent to remain in sanctuary, till she can learn news of her father, or, by the certainty of his death, be at liberty, with the approbation of her guardians, to dispose of herself in suitable marriage.—I shall give no such consent, said the prince: but insist on her return to the castle without delay: I am answerable for her person to her guardians, and will not brook her being in any hands but my own.—Your highness will recollect whether that can any longer be proper, replied the friar.—I want no monitor, said Manfred, coloring: Isabella's conduct leaves room for strange suspicions—and that young villain, who was at least the accomplice of her flight, if not the cause of it.—The cause? interrupted Jerome: was a young man the cause?—This is not to be borne! cried Manfred. Am I to be beard in my own palace by an insolent monk? thou art privy, I guess, to their amours.—I would pray to Heaven to clear up your uncharitable surmises, said Jerome, if your highness were not satisfied in your conscience how unjustly you accuse me. I do pray to Heaven to pardon that uncharitableness; and I implore your highness to leave the princess at peace in that holy place, where she is not liable to be disturbed by such vain and worldly fantasies as discourses of love from any man.—Can't not to me, said Manfred, but return and bring the princess to her duty.—It is my duty to prevent her return hither, said Jerome.—She is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her thence.—I am her parent, cried Manfred, and demand her.—She wished to have you for her parent, said the friar: but Heaven that forbade that connexion, has for ever dissolved all ties betwixt you: and I announce to your highness.—Stop! audacious man, said Manfred, and dread my displeasure.—Holy father, said Hippolita, it is your office to be no respecter of persons; you must speak as your duty

prescribes: but it is my duty to hear nothing that it pleases not my lord I should hear. Attend the prince to his chamber. I will retire to my oratory, and pray to the blessed virgin to inspire you with her holy counsel, and to restore the heart of my gracious lord to its wonted peace and gentleness.—Excellent woman! said the friar—my lord, I attend your pleasure.

Manfred, accompanied by the friar, passed to his own apartment, where, shutting the door, I perceive, father, said he, that Isabella has acquainted you with my purpose. Now hear my resolve, and obey. Reasons of state, most urgent reasons, my own and the safety of my people, demand that I should have a son. It is in vain to expect an heir from Hippolita—I have made choice of Isabella.—You must bring her back, and you must do more.—I know the influence you have with Hippolita: her conscience is in your hands. She is, I allow, a faultless woman: her soul is set on heaven, and scorns the little grandeur of this world: you can withdraw her from it entirely. Persuade her to consent to the dissolution of our marriage, and to retire into a monastery—she shall endow one if she will; and she shall have the means of being as liberal to your order as she or you can wish. Thus you will divert the clamories that are hanging over our heads, and have the merit of saving the principality of Otranto from destruction. You are a prudent man, and though the warmth of my temper betrayed me into some unbecoming expressions, I honor your virtue, and wish to be indebted to you for the repose of my life and the preservation of my family.

The will of Heaven be done! said the friar. I am but its worthless instrument. It makes use of my tongue, to tell thee, prince, of thy unwarrantable designs. The injuries of the virtuous Hippolita have mounted to the throne of pity. By me thou art reprimanded for thy adulterous intention of repudiating her: by me thou art warned not to pursue the incestuous design on thy contracted daughter. Heaven, that delivered her from thy fury, when the judgments so recently fallen on thy house ought to have inspired thee with other thoughts, will continue to watch over her. Even I, a poor and despised friar, am able to protect her from thy violence—I, sinner as I am, and uncharitably reviled by your highness as an accomplice of I know not what amours, scorn the allurements with which it has pleased thee to tempt mine honesty. I love my order; I honor devout souls; I respect the piety of thy princess—but I will not betray the confidence she reposes in me, nor serve even the cause of religion by foul and sinful compliances—but, forsooth! the welfare of the state depends on your highness having a son! Heaven mocks the short-sighted views of man. But yesterday-morn, whose house was so great, so flourishing, as Manfred's?—where is young Conrad now!—My lord, I respect your tears—but I mean not to check them—let them flow, prince! they will weigh more with Heaven toward the welfare of thy subjects, than a marriage which, founded on lust or policy, could never prosper. The sceptre, which passed from the race of Alfonso to thee, cannot be preserved by a match which the church will never allow. If it is the will of the Most High that Manfred's name must perish, resign yourself, my lord, to its decrees; and thus deserve a crown that can never pass away. Come, my lord; I like this sorrow—let us return to the princess: she is not apprized of your cruel intentions; nor did I mean more than to alarm you. You saw with what gentle patience, with what efforts of love, she heard, she rejected hearing the extent of your guilt. I know she longs to fold you in her arms, and assure you of her unalterable affection.

—Father, said the prince, you mistake my conjunction. True—I honor Hippolita's virtues; I think her a saint; and wish it were for my soul's health to tie faster the knot that has united us: but, alas! father, you know not the bitterness of my pangs! it is some time that I have had scruples on the legality of our union: Hippolita is related to me in the fourth degree—it is true, we had a dispensation: but I have been informed, that she had also been contracted to another. This it is that sits heavy at my heart: to this state of unlawful wedlock I impute the visitation that has fallen on me in the death of Conrad! Ease my conscience of this burden; dissolve our marriage, and accomplish the work of godliness which your divine exhortations have commenced in my soul.

How cutting was the anguish which the good man felt, when he perceived this turn in the wily prince! He trembled for Hippolita, whose ruin he saw was determined; and he feared if Manfred had no hope of recovering Isabella, that his impatience for a son would direct him to some other object, who might not be equally proof against the temptation of Manfred's rank. For some time the holy man remained absorbed in thought. At length, conceiving some hopes from delay, he thought the wisest conduct would be to prevent the prince from despairing of recovering Isabella. Her the friar knew he could dispose, from her affection to Hippolita, and from the aversion she had expressed to him for Manfred's addresses, to second his views, till the censures of the church could be culminated against a divorce. With this intention, as if struck with the prince's scruples, he at length said, My lord, I have been pondering on what your highness has said; and if in truth it is delicacy of conscience that is the real motive of your repugnance to your virtuous lady, far be it from me to endeavor to harden your heart. The church is an indulgent mother: unfold your griefs to her; she alone can administer comfort to your soul, either by satisfying your conscience, or upon examination of your scruples, by setting you at liberty, and indulging you in the lawful means of continuing your lineage. In the latter case, if the Lady Isabella can be brought to consent.—Manfred, who concluded that he had either over-reached the good man, or that his first warmth had been but a tribute paid to appearance, was overjoyed at his sudden turn, and repeated the most magnificent promises; if he should succeed by the friar's meditation.

The well-meaning priest suffered him to deceive himself, fully determined to traverse his views, instead of seconding them.

Since we now understand one another, resumed the prince, I expect, father, that you satisfy me in one point. Who is the youth that I found in the vault? He must have been privy to Isabella's flight. Tell me truly—is he her lover? or is he an agent for another's passion? I have often suspected Isabella's indifference to my son: a thousand circumstances crowd on my mind that confirm that suspicion. She herself was so conscious of it, that while I discoursed her in the gallery she outran my suspicions, and endeavored to justify herself from coolness to Conrad. The friar, who knew nothing of the youth, but what he had learnt occasionally from the princess, ignorant what was become of him, and not sufficiently reflecting on the impetuosity of Manfred's temper, conceived that it might not be amiss to sow the seeds of jealousy in his mind: they might be turned to some use hereafter, either by prejudicing the prince against Isabella, if he persisted in that union; or, by diverting his attention to a wrong scent, and employing his thoughts on a visionary intrigue, prevent his engaging in any new pursuit. With this unhappy policy, he answered in a manner to confirm Manfred in the belief of some connexion between Isabella and the youth. The prince, whose passions wanted little fuel to throw them into a blaze, fell into a rage at the idea of what the friar suggested.—I will fathom to the bottom of this intrigue, cried he; and quitting Jerome abruptly, with a command to remain there till his return, he hastened to the great hall of the castle, and ordered the peasant to be brought before him.

Thou hardened young impostor! said the prince, as soon as he saw the youth; what becomes of thy boasted veracity now? It was Providence, was it, and the light of the moon, that discovered the lock of the trap-door to thee? Tell me, audacious boy, who thou art, and how long thou hast been acquainted with the princess.—and take care to answer with less equivocation than thou didst last night, or tortures shall wring the truth from thee. The young man, perceiving that his share in the flight of the princess was discovered, and concluding that any thing he should say could no longer be of service or detriment to her, replied—I am no impostor, my lord, nor have I deserved opprobrious language. I answered to every question your highness put to me last night with the same veracity that I shall speak now: and that will not be from fear of your tortures, but because my soul abhors a falsehood. Please to repeat your questions, my lord; I am ready to give you all the satisfaction in my power.—You know my questions, replied the prince, and only want time to prepare an evasion. Speak directly; who art thou? and how long hast thou been known to the princess?—I am a laborer at the next village, said the peasant; my name is Theodore. The princess found me in the vault last night: before that hour I never was in her presence.—I may believe as much or as little as I please of this, said Manfred—but I will hear thy own story, before I examine into the truth of it. Tell me, what reason did the princess give thee for making her escape? thy life depends on thy answer.—She told me, replied Theodore, that she was on the brink of destruction, and that if she could not escape from the castle, she was in danger in a few moments of being made miserable for ever.—And on this slight foundation, on a silly girl's report, said Manfred, thou didst hazard my displeasure?—I fear no man's displeasure, said Theodore, when a woman in distress puts herself under my protection.—During this examination, Matilda was going to the apartment of Hippolita. At the upper end of the hall, where Manfred sat, was a boarded gallery, with latticed windows, through which Matilda and Bianca were to pass. Hearing her father's voice, and seeing the servants assembled round him, she stopped to learn the occasion. The prisoner soon drew her attention; the steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply, which were the first words she heard distinctly, interested her in his favor. His person was noble, handsome, commanding, even in that situation; but his countenance soon engrossed her whole care.—Heavens! Bianca, said the princess softly, do I dream? or is not that youth the exact resemblance of Alfonso's picture in the gallery? She could say no more, for her father's voice grew louder at every word.—This bravado, said he, surpasses all thy former insolence. Thou shalt experience the wrath with which thou dar'st to trifle. Seize him! continued Manfred, and bind him—the first news the princess hears of her champion shall be, that he has lost his head for her sake.—The injustice of which thou art guilty towards me, said Theodore, convinces me that I have done a good deed in deliv'ring the princess from thy tyranny. May she be happy, whatever becomes of me!—This is a lover, cried Manfred, in a rage; a peasant within sight of death is not animated by such sentiments. Tell me, rash boy, who thou art, or the rack shall force the secret from thee?—Thou hast threatened me with death already, said the youth, for the truth I have told thee: if that is all the encouragement I am to expect for sincerity, I am not tempted to indulge thy vain curiosity farther.—Then thou wilt not speak? said Manfred.—I will not! replied he.—Bear him away into the court-yard! said Manfred: I will see his head this instant severed from his body.—Matilda fainted at hearing those words. Bianca shrieked, and cried, help! help! the princess is dead! Manfred started at this exclamation, and demanded what was the matter! The young peasant, who heard it too, was struck with horror, and asked eagerly the same question: but Manfred ordered him to be hurried into the court, and kept there for execution, till he had informed himself of the cause of Bianca's shrieks. When he learned the meaning, he treated it as womanish panic, and, ordering Matilda to be carried to her apartment, he rushed into the court, and calling for

one of his guards, bade Theodore kneel down, and prepare to receive the fatal blow.

The undaunted youth received the bitter sentence with a resignation that touched every heart but Manfred's. He wished earnestly to know the meaning of the words he had heard relating to the princess: but fearing to exasperate the tyrant more against her, he desisted. The only boon he deigned to ask, was that he might be permitted to have a confessor, and make his peace with Heaven. Manfred, who hoped by the confessor's means to come at the youth's history, readily granted his request: and being convinced that Father Jerome was now in his interest, he ordered him to be called and shrieve the prisoner. The holy man, who had little foreseen the catastrophe that his imprudence occasioned, fell on his knees to the prince, and adjured him in the most solemn manner not to shed innocent blood. He accused himself in the bitterest terms for his indiscretion, endeavored to disculpate the youth, and left no method untried to soften the tyrant's rage. Manfred, more incensed than appeased by Jerome's intercession, whose retraction now made him suspect he had been imposed upon by both, commanded the friar to do his duty, telling him he would not allow the prisoner many minutes for confession.—Nor do I ask many, my lord, said the unhappy young man. My sins, thank Heaven! have not been numerous; nor exceed what might be expected at my years. Dry your tears, good father, and let us despatch; this is a bad word; nor have I had cause to leave it with regret. Oh! wretched youth! said Jerome; how canst thou bear the sight of me with patience? I am thy murderer! it is I have brought this dismal hour upon thee—I forgive thee from my soul, said the youth, as I hope Heaven will pardon me. Hear my confession, father; and give me thy blessing.—How can I prepare thee for thy passage, as I ought; said Jerome. Thou canst not be saved without pardoning thy foes—and canst thou forgive that impious man there?—I can, said Theodore; I do.—And does not this touch thee? cruel prince! said the friar.—I sent for thee to confess him, said Manfred sternly; not to plead for him. Thou didst first incense me against him—his blood be upon thy head! It will! it will! said the good man, in an agony of sorrow. Thou and I must never hope to go where this blessed youth is going! Despatch, said Manfred: I am no more to be moved by the whining of priests, than by the shrieks of women.—What! said the youth; is it possible that my fate could have occasioned what I heard! is the princess then again in thy power?—Thou dost but remember me of my wrath, said Manfred: prepare thee, for this moment is thy last. The youth, who felt his indignation rise, and who was touched with the sorrow which he saw he had infused into all the spectators, as well as into the friar, suppressed his emotions, and putting off his doublet, and unbuttoning his collar, knelt down to his prayers. As he stooped, his shirt slipped down below his shoulder, and discovered the mark of a bloody arrow. Gracious Heaven! cried the holy man starting, what do I see! It is my child! my Theodore!

The passions that ensued must be conceived; they cannot be painted. The tears of the assistants were suspended by wonder, rather than stopped by joy. They seemed to inquire in the eyes of their lord what they ought to feel. Surprise, doubt, tenderness, respect, succeeded each other in the countenance of the youth. He received with modest submission the effusion of the old man's tears and embraces: yet afraid giving a loose to hope; and suspecting from what had passed the inflexibility of Manfred's temper, he cast a glance towards the prince, as if to say, canst thou be unmoved at such a scene as this?

Manfred's heart was capable of being touched. He forgot his anger in his astonishment: yet his pride forbade his owning himself affected. He even doubted whether this discovery was not a contrivance of the friar to save the youth. What may this mean? said he: how can he be thy son? it is consistent with thy profession or reputed sanctity to avow a peasant's offspring for the fruit of thy irregular amours!—Oh! God, said the holy man, dost thou question his being mine? could I feel the anguish I do, if I were not his father? Spare him! good prince, spare him! and revile me as thou pleasest. Spare him! spare him! cried the attendants, for this good man's sake! Peace! said Manfred sternly: I must know more, ere I am disposed to pardon. A saint's bastard may be no saint himself.—Injurious lord! said Theodore; add not insult to cruelty. If I am this venerable man's son, though no prince, as thou art, know, the blood that flows in my veins—Yes, said the friar, interrupting him, his blood is noble; nor is he that abject thing, my lord, you speak him. He is my lawful son; and Sicily can boast of few houses more ancient than that of Falconara—but, alas! my lord, what is blood! what is nobility! We are all reptiles, miserable, sinful creatures. It is pity alone that can distinguish us from the dust whence we sprang, and whither we must return—True to your sermon, said Manfred: you forget you are no longer Friar Jerome, but the Count of Falconara. Let me know your history: you will have time to moralize hereafter, if you should not happen to obtain the grace of that sturdy criminal there.—Mother of God! said the friar, is it possible my lord can refuse a father the life of his only, his long-lost child! Trample me, my lord, scorn, afflict me, accept my life for his, but spare my son!—Thou canst feel then, said Manfred, what it is to lose an only son!—A little hour ago thou didst preach up resignation to me: my house, if fate so pleased, must perish—but the Count of Falconara—Alas! my lord, said Jerome, I confess I have offended; but aggravate not an old man's sufferings! I boast not of my family, nor think of such vanities—it is nature that pleads for this boy; it is the memory of the dear woman that bore him—is she, Theodore, is she dead?—Her soul has long been with the blessed, said Theodore.—Oh! how? cried Jerome, tell me—No; she is happy! Thou art all my care now!

Most dread lord! will you—will you grant me my poor boy's life?—Return to thy convent, answered Manfred; conduct the princess hither; obey me in what else thou knowest; and I promise thee the life of thy son—Oh! my lord, said Jerome, is my honesty the price I must pay for this dear youth's safety?—For me! cried Theodore: let me die a thousand deaths, rather than stain thy conscience. What is it the tyrant would exact of thee? Is the princess still safe from his power? Protect her, thou venerable old man; and let all the weight of his wrath fall on me. Jerome endeavored to check the impetuosity of the youth; and ere Manfred could reply, the trampling of horses was heard, and a brazen trumpet, which hung without the gate of the castle, was suddenly sounded. At the same instant the sable plumes on the enchanted helmet, which still remained at the other end of the court, were tempestuously agitated, and nodded thrice, as if bowed by some invisible weaver.

CHAP. III.

MANFRED'S heart misgave him when he beheld the plume on the miraculous casque shaken in concert with the sounding of the brazen trumpet. Father! said he to Jerome, whom he now ceased to treat as Count of Falconara, what mean these portents? If I have offended—the plumes were shaken with greater violence than before. Unhappy prince that I am! cried Manfred—Holy father! will you not assist me with your prayers?—My lord, replied Jerome, Heaven is no doubt displeased with your mockery of its servants. Submit yourself to the church; and cease to persecute her ministers. Dismiss this innocent youth; and learn to respect the holy character I wear: Heaven will not be trifled with: you see—the trumpet sounded again. I acknowledge I have been too hasty, said Manfred. Father, do you go to the wicket, and demand who is at the gate.—Do you grant me the life of Theodore? replied the friar.—I do, said Manfred; but inquire who is without!

Jerome falling on the neck of his son, discharged a flood of tears, that spoke the fullness of his soul. You promised to go to the gate, said Manfred.—I thought, replied the friar, your highness would excuse my thanking you first in this tribute of my heart.—Go, dearest Sir, said Theodore, obey the prince: I do not deserve that you should delay his satisfaction for me.

Jerome, inquiring who was without, was answered, a herald.—From whom? said he.—From the knight of the gigantic sabre, said the herald; and I must speak with the usurper of Otranto. Jerome returned to the prince, and did not fail to repeat the message in the very words it had been uttered. The first sounds struck Manfred with terror; but when he heard himself styled usurper, his rage rekindled, and all his courage revived. Usurper! insolent villain! cried he, who dares to question my title? Retire, father: this is no business for monks: I will meet this presumptuous man myself. Go to your convent and prepare the princess's return: your son shall be a hostage for your fidelity: his life depends on your obedience.—Good heaven! my lord, cried Jerome, your highness did but this instant freely pardon my child—have you so soon forgot the interposition of Heaven?—Heaven, replied Manfred, does not send heralds to question the title of a lawful prince.—I doubt whether it even notifies its will through friars.—But that is your affair, not mine. At present you know my pleasure; and it is not a saucy herald that shall save your son, if you do not return with the princess.

It was in vain for the holy man to reply. Manfred commanded him to be conducted to the postern gate, and shut out from the castle: and he ordered some of his attendants to carry Theodore to the top of the black tower, and guard him strictly; scarce permitting the father and son to exchange a hasty embrace at parting. He then withdrew to the hall, and seating himself in princely state, ordered the herald to be admitted to his presence.

Well! thou insolent! said the prince, what wouldst thou with me?—I come, replied he, to thee, Manfred, usurper of the principality of Otranto, from the renowned and invincible knight, the knight of the gigantic sabre: in the name of his lord, Frederic, Marquis of Vicenza, he demands the Lady Isabella, daughter of that prince, whom thou hast basely and traitorously got into thy power, by bribing her false guardians during his absence: and he requires thee to resign the principality of Otranto, which thou hast usurped from the said Lord Frederic, the nearest of blood to the last rightful Lord Alfonso the Good. If thou dost not instantly comply with these just demands, he defies thee to single combat to the last extremity. And so saying, the herald cast down his war-dart.

And where is the braggart, who sends thee? said Manfred.—At the distance of a league, said the herald: he comes to make good his lord's claim against thee, as he is a true knight, and thou an usurper and ravisher.

Injurious as this challenge was, Manfred reflected that it was not his interest to provoke the marquis. He knew how well founded the claim of Frederic was; nor was this the first time he had heard of it. Frederic's ancestors had assumed the style of Princes of Otranto, from the death of Alfonso the Good without issue; but Manfred, his father, and grandfather, had been too powerful for the house of Vicenza to dispossess them. Frederic, a martial and amorous young prince, had married a beautiful young lady, of whom he was enamoured, and who had died in childbed of Isabella. Her death affected him so much, that he had taken the cross and gone to the Holy Land, where he was wounded in an engagement against the infidels, made prisoner, and reported to be dead. When the news reached Manfred's ears, he bribed the guardians of the Lady Isabella to deliver her up as a bride for his son Conrad, by which alliance he had proposed to unite the claims of the two houses. This

motive, on Conrad's death, had co-operated to make him so suddenly resolve on epousing her herself; and the same reflection determined him now to endeavor at obtaining the consent of Frederic to this marriage. A like policy inspired him with the thought of inviting Frederic's champion into his castle, lest he should be informed of Isabella's flight, which he strictly enjoined his domestics not to disclose to any of the knight's retinue.

Herald, said Manfred, as soon as he had digested these reflections, return to thy master, and tell him, ere we liquidate our differences by the sword, Manfred would hold some converse with him. Bid him welcome to my castle, where, by my faith, as I am a true knight, he shall have courteous reception, and full security for himself and followers. If we cannot adjust our quarrel by amicable means, I swear he shall depart in safety, and shall have full satisfaction according to the laws of arms: So help me God and his holy Trinity! The herald made three obeisances and retired.

During this interview, Jerome's mind was agitated by a thousand contrary passions. He trembled for the life of his son, and his first thought was to persuade Isabella to return to the castle. Yet he was scarce less alarmed at the thought of her union with Manfred. He dreaded Hippolita's unbounded submission to the will of her lord; and though he did not doubt but he could alarm her piety not to consent to a divorce, if he could get access to her; yet, should Manfred discover that the obstruction came from him, it might be equally fatal to Theodore. He was impatient to know whence came the herald, who with so little management had questioned the title of Manfred: yet he did not dare absent himself from the convent, lest Isabella should leave it, and her flight be imputed to him. He returned disconsolately to the monastery, uncertain on what conduct to resolve. A monk, who met him in the porch, and observed his melancholy air, said, Alas! brother, is it then true that we have lost our excellent Princess Hippolita? The holy man started, and cried, What meanest thou, brother? I come this instant from the castle, and left her in perfect health.—Martelli, replied the other friar, passed by the convent but a quarter of an hour ago on his way from the castle, and reported that her highness was dead. All our brethren are gone to the chapel to pray for her happy transit to a better life, and willed me to await thy arrival. They know thy holy attachment to that good lady, and are anxious for the affliction it will cause in thee—indeed we have all reason to weep; she was a mother to our house.—But this life is but a pilgrimage; we must not murmur—we shall all follow her! may our end be like hers!—Good brother, thou dreamest, said Jerome: I tell thee I come from the castle, and left the princess well.—Where is the Lady Isabella?—Poor gentleman! replied the friar; I told her the sad news, and offered her spiritual comfort; I reminded her of the transitory condition of mortality, and advised her to take the veil: I quoted the example of the holy Princess Sanchia of Arragon.—Thy zeal was laudable, said Jerome impatiently; but at present it was unnecessary! Hippolita is well—at least I trust in the Lord she is: I heard nothing to the contrary—yet methinks, the prince's earnestness—Well, brother, but where is the Lady Isabella?—I know not, said the friar: she wept much, and said she would retire to her chamber. Jerome left his comrade abruptly, and hastened to the princess, but she was not in her chamber. He inquired of the domestics of the convent, but could learn no news of her. He searched in vain throughout the monastery and the church, and dispatched messengers round the neighborhood, to get intelligence if she had been seen; but to no purpose. Nothing could equal the good man's perplexity. He judged that Isabella, suspecting Manfred of having precipitated his wife's death, had taken the alarm, and withdrawn herself to some more secret place of concealment. This new flight would probably carry the prince's fury to the height. The report of Hippolita's death, though it seemed almost incredible, increased his consternation; and though Isabella's escape bespoke her aversion of Manfred for a husband, Jerome could feel no comfort from it, while it endangered the life of his son. He determined to return to the castle, and made several of his brethren accompany him to attest his innocence to Manfred, and, if necessary, join their intercession with his for Theodore.

The prince, in the mean time, had passed into the court, and ordered the gates of the castle to be flung open for the reception of the stranger knight and his train. In a few minutes the cavalcade arrived. First came two harbingers with wands. Next a herald, followed by two pages and two trumpets. Then a hundred foot-guards. These were attended by as many horse. After them fifty footmen, clothed in scarlet and black, the colors of the knight. Then a led horse. Two heralds on each side of a gentleman on horseback, bearing a banner with the arms of Vicenza and Otranto quarterly—a circumstance that much offended Manfred—but he stifled his resentment. Two more pages. The knight's confessor telling his beads. Fifty more footmen clad as before. Two knights habited in complete armor, their beavers down, comrades to the principal knight. The squire of the two knights, carrying their shields and devices. The knight's own squire. A hundred gentlemen bearing an enormous sword, and seeming to faint under the weight of it. The knight himself on a chestnut steed, in complete armor, his lance in the rest, his face entirely concealed by his visor, which was surmounted by a large plume of scarlet and black feathers. Fifty foot guards with drums and trumpets closed the procession, which wheeled off to the right and left to make room for the principal knight.

As soon as he approached the gate, he stopped; and the herald advancing, read again the words of the challenge. Manfred's eyes were fixed on the gigantic sword, and his scarce seemed to attend to the cartel: but this attention was

soon diverted by a tempest of wind that rose behind him. He turned, and beheld the plumes of the enchanted helmet agitated in the same extraordinary manner as before. It required intrepidity like Manfred's not to sink under a concurrence of circumstances that seemed to announce his fate. Yet scorning in the presence of strangers to betray the courage he had always manifested, he said boldly, Sir Knight, whoever thou art, I bid thee welcome. If thou art a true knight, thou wilt scorn to employ sorcery to carry thy point. Be these omens from heaven or hell, Manfred trusts to the righteousness of his cause and to the aid of St. Nicholas, who has ever protected his house. Alight, Sir Knight, and repose thyself. To-morrow thou shalt have a fair field; and Heaven befriend the juster side!

The knight made no reply, but dismounting, was conducted by Manfred to the great hall of the castle. As they traversed the court, the knight stopped to gaze on the miraculous casque; and, kneeling down, seemed to pray inwardly for some minutes. Rising, he made a sign to the prince to lead on. As soon as they entered the hall, Manfred proposed to the stranger to disarm, but the knight shook his head in token of refusal. Sir Knight, said Manfred, this is not courteous; but by my good faith I will not cross thee; nor shalt thou have cause to complain of the Prince of Otranto. No treachery is designed on my part; I hope none is intended on thine; here, take my gage (giving him his ring): your friends and you shall enjoy the laws of hospitality. Rest here, until refreshments are brought: I will but give orders for the accommodation of your train, and return to you. The three knights bowed as accepting his courtesy. Manfred directed the stranger's retinue to be conducted to an adjacent hospital, founded by the Princess Hippolyta for the reception of pilgrims. As they made the circuit of the court, to return towards the gate, the gigantic sword burst from the supporters, and falling to the ground opposite to the helmet, remained immovable. Manfred, almost hardened to preternatural appearances, surmounted the shock of this new prodigy; and returning to the hall, where by this time the feast was ready, he invited his silent guests to take their places. Manfred, however ill his heart was at ease, endeavored to inspire the company with mirth. He put several questions to them, but was answered only by signs. They raised their visors but sufficiently to feed themselves, and that sparingly. Sirs, said the prince, ye are the first guests I ever treated within these walls, who scorned to hold any intercourse with me: nor has it often been customary, I ween, for princes to hazard their state and dignity against strangers and mutes. You say you come in the name of Frederic of Vicenza; I have ever heard that he was a gallant and courteous knight; nor would he, I am bold to say, think it beneath him to mix in social converse with a prince that is his equal, and not unknown by deeds in arms—Still ye are silent—well! be it as it may—by the laws of hospitality and chivalry ye are masters under this roof: ye shall do your pleasure—but come, give me a goblet of wine; ye will not refuse to pledge me to the healths of your fair mistresses. The principal knight sighed and crossed himself, and was rising from the board—Sir Knight, said Manfred, what I said was but in sport; I shall constrain you to nothing: use your good liking. Since mirth is not your mood, let us be sad. Business may hit your fancies better: let us withdraw: and hear if what I have to unfold, may be better relished than the vain efforts I have made for your pastime.

Manfred then conducting the three knights into an inner chamber, shut the door, and inviting them to be seated, began thus, addressing himself to the chief personage:—

You come, Sir Knight, as I understand, in the name of the Marquis of Vicenza, to re-demand the Lady Isabella, his daughter, who has been contracted in the face of holy church to my son, by the consent of her legal guardians; and to require me to resign my dominions to your lord, who gives himself for the nearest of blood to Prince Alfonso, whose soul God rest! I shall speak to the latter article of your demands first. You must know, your lord knows, that I enjoy the principality of Otranto from my father, Don Manuel, as he received it from his father Don Ricardo. Alfonso, their predecessor, dying childless in the Holy Land, bequeathed his estates to my grandfather, Don Ricardo, in consideration of his faithful services—the stranger shook his head—Sir Knight, said Manfred warmly, Ricardo was a valiant and upright man; he was a pious man; witness his munificent foundation of the adjoining church and two convents. He was peculiarly patronized by St. Nicholas—my grandfather was incapable—I say, Sir, Don Ricardo was incapable—excuse me, your interruption has disordered me—I venerate the memory of my grandfather—well! Sirs, he held this estate; he held it by his good sword and by the favor of St. Nicholas—so did my father; and so, Sirs, will I, come what come will—But Frederic, your lord, is nearest in blood—does he have consented to put my title to the issue of the sword—does that imply a vicious title?—I might have asked, where is Frederic, your lord? Report speaks him dead in captivity. You say, your actions say, he lives—I question it not—I might, Sirs, I might—but I do not. Other princes would bid Frederic take his inheritance by force, if he can: they would not stake their dignity on a single combat: they would not submit it to the decision of unknown mutes—pardon me, gentlemen, I am too warm: but suppose yourselves in my situation: as ye are stout knights, would it not move your choler to have your own and the honor of your ancestors called in question?—But to the point: ye require me to deliver up the Lady Isabella—Sirs, I must ask if ye are authorized to receive her: the knight nodded. Receive her—continued Manfred; well! you are authorized to receive her—but, gentle knight, may I ask if you have full powers? The

knight nodded. 'Tis well, said Manfred. Then hear what I have to offer—Ye see, gentlemen, before you the most unhappy of men! [he began to weep] afford me your compassion; I am entitled to it: indeed I am. Know, I have lost my only hope, my joy, the support of my house—Conrad died yesterday-morning. The knights discovered signs of surprise. Yes, Sirs, fate has disposed of my son. Isabella is at liberty—Do you then restore her? cried the chief knight, breaking silence—Afford me your patience, said Manfred, I rejoice to find, by this testimony of your good-will, that this matter may be adjusted without blood. It is no interest of mine dictates what little I have further to say. Ye behold in me a man disgusted with the world; the loss of my son has weaned me from earthly cares. Power and greatness have no longer any charms in my eyes. I wished to transmit the sceptre I had received from my ancestors with honor to my son—but that is over! Life itself is so indifferent to me, that I accepted your defiance with joy: a good knight cannot go to the grave with more satisfaction than when falling in his vocation: whatever is the will of Heaven, I submit for all objects! Sirs, I am a man of many sorrows. Manfred is no object of envy—but no doubt you are acquainted with my story. The knight made signs of ignorance, and seemed curious to have Manfred proceed. Is it possible, Sirs, continued the prince, that my story should be a secret to you? have you heard nothing relating to me and the Princess Hippolyta? They shook their heads.—No! thus then, Sirs, it is. You think me ambitious: ambition, alas! is composed of more rugged materials. If I were ambitious, I should not for so many years have been a prey to all the hell of conscientious scruples—But I weary your patience: I will be brief. Know then, that I have long been troubled in mind on my union with the Princess Hippolyta.—Oh! Sirs, if ye were acquainted with that excellent woman! if ye knew that I adore her like a mistress, and cherish her as a friend—but man was not born for perfect happiness! she shares my scruples, and with her consent I have brought this matter before the church, for we are related within the forbidden degrees. I expect every hour the definitive sentence that must separate us for ever—I am sure you feel for me—I see you do—pardon these tears! The knights gazed on each other, wondering where this would end. Manfred continued. The death of my son bedeviling while my soul was under this anxiety, I thought of nothing but resigning my dominions, and retiring for ever from the sight of mankind. My only difficulty was to fix on a successor, who would be tender of my people, and to dispose of the Lady Isabella, who is dear to me as my own blood. I was willing to restore the line of Alfonso, even in his most distant kindred: and although, pardon me, I am satisfied it was his will that Ricardo's lineage should take place of his own relations, yet where was I to search for those relations? I knew of none but Frederic, your lord; he was a captive to the infidels, or dead; and were he living, and at home, would he quit the flourishing state of Vicenza for the inconsiderable principality of Otranto? If he would not, could I bear the thoughts of seeing a hard unfeeling viceroy set over my poor faithful people?—for, Sirs, I love my people, and, thank Heaven, am beloved by them. But ye will ask, whither tends this long discourse: briefly then, Sirs, Heaven in your arrival seems to point out a remedy for these difficulties and my misfortunes. The Lady Isabella is at liberty; I shall soon be so—I would submit to anything for the good of my people—were it not the best, the only way to extinguish the feuds between our families, if I was to take the Lady Isabella to wife—you start—but though Hippolyta's virtues will ever be dear to me, a prince must not consider himself; he is born for his people.—A servant at that instant entering the chamber, apprized Manfred that Jerome and several of his brethren demanded immediate access to him.

The prince, provoked at this interruption, and fearing that the friar would discover to the strangers that Isabella had taken sanctuary, was going to forbid Jerome's entrance. But recollecting that he was certainly arrived to notify the princess's return, Manfred began to excuse himself to the knights for leaving them for a few moments, but was prevented by the arrival of the friars. Manfred angrily remonstrated them for their intrusion, and would have forced them back from the chamber; but Jerome was too much agitated to be repulsed. He declared aloud the flight of Isabella, with protestations of his own innocence. Manfred, distracted at the news, and not less at its coming to the knowledge of the strangers, uttered nothing but incoherent sentences, now upbraiding the friar, now apologizing to the knights, earnest to know what was become of Isabella, yet equally afraid of their knowing; impatient to pursue her, yet dreading to have them join in the pursuit. He offered to dispatch messengers in quest of her, but the chief knight no longer keeping silence, reproached Manfred in bitter terms for his dark and ambiguous dealing, and demanded the cause of Isabella's first absence from the castle. Manfred, casting a stern look at Jerome, implying a command of silence, pretended that on Conrad's death he had placed her in sanctuary until he could determine how to dispose of her. Jerome, who trembled for his son's life, did not dare contradict this falsehood; but one of his brethren, not under the same anxiety, declared frankly that she had fled to their church in the preceding night. The prince in vain endeavored to stop this discovery, which overwhelmed him with shame and confusion. The principal stranger, amazed at the contradictions he heard, and more than half persuaded that Manfred had secreted the princess, notwithstanding the concern he expressed at her flight, rushing to the door, said, Thou traitor-prince! Isabella shall be found. Manfred endeavored to hold him, but the other knights assisting their comrade, he broke from the prince, and hastened into the court, demanding his attendants. Manfred, finding

it vain to divert him from the pursuit, offered to accompany him; and summoning his attendants, and taking Jerome and some of the friars to guide them, they issued from the castle; Manfred privately giving orders to have the knight's company secured, while to the knight he affected to dispatch a messenger to require their assistance.

The company had no sooner quitted the castle, than Matilda, who felt herself deeply interested for the young peasant, since she had seen him condemned to death in the hall, and whose thoughts had been taken up with concerning measures to save him, was informed by some of the female attendants that Manfred had dispatched all his men various ways in pursuit of Isabella. He had in his hurry given this order in general terms, not meaning to extend it to the guard he had set upon Theodore, but forgetting it. The domestics, officious to obey so preeminent a prince, and urged by their own curiosity and love of novelty to join in any precipitate chase, had to a man left the castle. Matilda disengaged herself from her women, stole up to the black tower, and unbolting the door, presented herself to the astonished Theodore. Young man, said she, though filial duty, and womanly modesty, condemn the step I am taking, yet holy charity, surmounting all other ties, justifies this act. Fly; the doors of thy prison are open; my father and his domestics are absent: but they may soon return: begone in safety; and may the angels of heaven direct thy course!—Thou art surely one of those angels! said the enraptured Theodore. None but a blessed saint could speak, could act—could look like thee!—May I not know the name of my divine protectress? methought thou namedst thy father: is it possible! can Manfred's blood feel holy pity!—Lovely lady, thou answerest not—but how art thou here thyself? why dost thou neglect thy own safety, and waste a thought on a wretch like Theodore? Let us fly together: the life thou bestowest shall be dedicated to thy defence.—Alas! thou mistakest, said Matilda, sighing: I am Manfred's daughter, but no dangers await me.—Amazement! said Theodore: but last night I blessed myself for yielding thee the services thy gracious compassion so charitably returns me now. Still thou art in an error; said the princess; but this is no time for explanation. Fly, virtuous youth, while it is in my power to save thee: should my father return, thou and I both should indeed have cause to tremble.—How! said Theodore; thinkest thou, charming maid, that I will accept of life at the hazard of aught calamitous to thee? better I endured a thousand deaths.—I run no risk, said Matilda, but by thy delay. Depart; it cannot be known that I assisted thy flight.—Swear by the saints above, said Theodore, that thou canst not be suspected; else here I vow to await whatever can befall me.—Oh! thou art too generous, said Matilda; but rest assured that no suspicion can alight on me.—Give me thy beautiful hand in token that thou dost not deceive me, said Theodore; and let me bathe it with the warm tears of gratitude.—Forbear, said the princess; this must not be.—Alas! said Theodore, I have never known but calamity until this hour—perhaps shall never know other fortune again: suffer the chaste raptures of holy gratitude: 'tis my soul would print its effusions on thy hand.—Forbear; and be gone—said Matilda.—how would Isabella approve of seeing thee at my feet?—Who is Isabella? said the young man with surprise.—Ah me! I fear, said the princess, I am serving a deceitful one.—hast thou forgot thy curiosity this morning?—Thy looks, thy actions, all thy beautiful self seems an emanation of divinity, said Theodore, but thy words are dark and mysterious.—speak, lady; speak to thy servant's comprehension. Thou understandest but too well! said Matilda: but once more I command thee to be gone: thy blood, which I may preserve, will be on my head, if I waste the time in vain discourse.—I go, lady, said Theodore, because it is thy will, and because I would not bring the grey hairs of my father with sorrow to the grave. Say but, adored lady, that I have thy gentle pity—Stay, said Matilda: I will conduct thee to the subterranean vault by which Isabella escaped; it will lead thee to the church of St. Nicholas, where thou mayest take sanctuary.—What! said Theodore, was it another, and not thy lovely self, that I assisted to find the subterranean passage?—It was! said Matilda: but ask no more; I tremble to see thee still abide here: fly to the sanctuary.—To sanctuary? said Theodore: no, princess, sanctuaries are for helpless damsels, or for criminals. Theodore's soul is free from guilt, nor will wear the appearance of it. Give me a sword, lady, and thy father shall learn that Theodore scorns an ignominious flight.—Rash youth! said Matilda, thou wouldst not dare to lift thy presumptuous arm against the Prince of Otranto?—Not against thy father! indeed I dare not, said Theodore: excuse me, lady; I had forgotten—but could I gaze on thee, and remember thou art sprung from the tyrant Manfred?—but he is thy father, and from this moment my injuries are buried in oblivion. A deep and hollow groan, which seemed to come from above, startled the princess and Theodore. Good Heaven! we are overheard! said the princess. They listened; but perceiving no farther noise, they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapors: and the princess preceding Theodore softly, carried him to her father's armory, where, equipping him with a complete suit, he was conducted by Matilda to the postern-gate. Avoid the town, said the princess, and all the western side of the castle: 'tis there the search must be making by Manfred and the strangers: but hie thee to the opposite quarter. Yonder, behind that forest to the east, is a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns that reach to the sea-coast. There thou mayest lie concealed, till thou canst make signs to some vessel to put on shore and take thee off. Go; Heaven be thy guide!—and sometimes in thy prayers remember—Matilda! Theodore flung himself at her feet, and seizing her lily hand, which with struggles she suffered him to kiss, he vowed on the earliest opportunity to get him-

self knighted, and fervently entreated her permission to swear himself eternally her knight—Ere the princess could reply, a clap of thunder was suddenly heard, that shook the battlement. Theodore, regardless of the tempest, would have urged his suit; but the princess, dismayed, retreated hastily into the castle, and commanded the youth to be gone with an air that would not be disobeyed. He sighed, and retired, but with eyes fixed on the gate, until Matilda closing it, put an end to an interview, in which the heart of both had drunk so deeply of a passion, which both now tasted for the first time.

Theodore went pensively to the convent, to acquaint his father with his deliverance. There he learned the absence of Jerome, and the pursuit that was making after the Lady Isabella, with some particulars of whose story he now first became acquainted. The generous gallantry of his nature prompted him to wish to assist her; but the monks could lend him no lights to guess at the route she had taken. He was not tempted to wander far in search of her, for the idea of Matilda, had imprinted itself so strongly on his heart, that he could not bear to absent himself at much distance from her abode. The tenderness Jerome had expressed for him concurred to confirm this reluctance; and he even persuaded himself that filial affection was the chief cause of his hovering between the castle and monastery. Until Jerome should return at night, Theodore at length determined to repair to the forest that Matilda had pointed out to him. Arriving there, he sought the gloomiest shades, as best suited to the pleasing melancholy that reigned in his mind. In this mood he roved insensibly to the caves which had formerly served as a retreat to hermits, and were now reported round the country to be haunted by evil spirits. He recollected to have heard this tradition; and being of a brave and adventurous disposition, he willingly indulged his curiosity in exploring the secret recesses of this labyrinth. He had not penetrated far before he thought he heard the steps of some person who seemed to retreat before him. Theodore, though firmly grounded in all our holy faith enjoins to be believed, had no apprehension that good men were abandoned without cause to the malice of the powers of darkness. He thought the place more likely to be infested by robbers than by those infernal agents who are reported to molest and bewilder travelers. He had long burned with impatience to approve his valor—drawing his sabre, he marched sedately onwards, still directing his steps, as the imperfect rustling sound before led the way. The armor he wore was a like indication to the person who avoided him. Theodore, now convinced that he was not mistaken, redoubled his pace, and evidently gained on the person that fled, whose haste increasing, Theodore came up just as a woman fell breathless before him. He hastened to raise her, but her terror was so great that he apprehended she would faint in his arms. He used every gentle word to dispel her alarms, and assured her that far from injuring, he would defend her at the peril of his life. The lady recovering her spirits from her courteous demeanor, and gazing on her protector, said, Sure I have heard that voice before!—Not to my knowledge, replied Theodore, unless, as I conjecture, thou art the Lady Isabella.—Merciful Heaven! cried she, thou art not sent in quest of me, art thou? and saying these words, she threw herself at his feet, and besought him not to deliver her up to Manfred. To Manfred! cried Theodore—no, lady, I have once already delivered thee from his tyranny, and I shall fare hard with me now, but I will place thee out of the reach of his daring.—Is it possible, said she, that thou shouldst be the generous unknown whom I met last night in the vault of the castle? sure thou art not a mortal, but my guardian angel: on my knees let me thank—Hold, gentle princess, said Theodore, nor demean thyself before a poor and friendless young man. If Heaven has selected me for thy deliverer, it will accomplish its work, and strengthen my arm in thy cause—But come, lady, we are too near the mouth of the cavern; let us seek its inmost recesses: I can have no tranquillity till I have placed thee beyond the reach of danger.—Alas! what mean you, Sir? said she. Though all your actions are noble, though your sentences speak the purity of your soul, is it fitting that I should accompany you alone into these perplexed retreats? should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct?—I respect your virtuous delicacy, said Theodore; nor do you harbor a suspicion that wounds my honor. I meant to conduct you into the most private cavity of these rocks, and then at the hazard of my life to guard their entrance against every living thing. Besides, lady, continued he, drawing a deep sigh, beautiful and all perfect as your form is, and though my wishes are not guiltless of aspiring, know, my soul is dedicated to another; and although—a sudden noise prevented Theodore from proceeding. They soon distinguished these sounds, Isabella! what ho! Isabella!—the trembling princess relapsed into her former agony of fear. Theodore endeavored to encourage her, but in vain. He assured her he would die rather than suffer her to return under Manfred's power; and begging her to remain concealed, he went forth to prevent the person in search of her from approaching.

At the mouth of the cavern he found an armed knight, discoursing with a peasant, who assured him he had seen a lady enter the passes of the rock. The knight was preparing to seek her, when Theodore, placing himself in his way, with his sword drawn, sternly forbade him at his peril to advance. And who art thou who dares to cross my way? said the knight haughtily.—One who does not dare more than he will perform, said Theodore.—I seek the Lady Isabella, said the knight, and understand she has taken refuge among these rocks. Impede me not, or thou wilt repent having provoked my resentment.—Thy purpose is as odious as thy resentment is contemptible, said Theodore: return whence thou camest, or we shall soon know whose resentment is most ter-

rible. The stranger, who was the principal knight that had arrived from the Marquis of Vicenza, had galloped from Manfred as he was busy in getting information of the princess, and giving various orders to prevent her falling into the power of the three knights. Their chief had suspected Manfred of being privy to the princess's abounding; and this insult from a man, who he concluded was stationed by that prince to secrete her, confirming his suspicions, he made no reply, but discharging a blow with his sabre at Theodore, would soon have removed all obstruction, if Theodore, who took him for one of Manfred's captains, and who had no sooner given the provocation than prepared to support it, had not received the stroke on his shield. The valor that he so long been smothered in his breast, broke forth at once; he rushed impetuously on the knight, whose pride and wrath were no less powerful incentives to hardy deed. The combat was furious, but not long: Theodore wounded the knight in three several places, and at last disarmed him as he fainted by the loss of blood. The peasant, who had fled on the first onset, had given the alarm to some of Manfred's domestics, who by his orders were dispersed through the forest in pursuit of Isabella. They came up as the knight fell, whom they soon discovered to be the noble stranger. Theodore, notwithstanding his hatred to Manfred, could not behold the victory he had gained without emotions of pity and curiosity: but he was more touched, when he learned the quality of his adversary, and was informed that he was no retainer, but an enemy of Manfred. He assisted the servants of the latter in disarming the knight, and in endeavoring to staunch the blood that flowed from his wounds. The knight, recovering his speech, said in a faint and faltering voice, Generous foe, we have both been in an error: I took thee for an instrument of the tyrant; I perceive thou hast made the like mistake—it is too late for excuses—I faint—if Isabella is at hand—call her—I have important secrets to—He is dying! said one of the attendants; has nobody a crucifix about them? Andrea, do thou pray over him—Fetch some water, said Theodore, and pour it down his throat, while I hasten to the princess—saying this, he flew to Isabella, and in a few words told her modestly, that he had been so unfortunate by mistake as to wound a gentleman from her father's court, who wished ere he died to impart something of consequence to her. The princess, who had been transported at hearing the voice of Theodore, as he called to her to come forth, was astonished at what she heard. Suffering herself to be conducted by Theodore, the new proof of whose valor recalled her dispersed spirits, she came where the bleeding knight lay speechless on the ground—but her fears returned, when she beheld the domestics of Manfred. She would again have fled, if Theodore had not made her observe that they were unarmed, and had not threatened them with instant death, if they should dare to seize the princess. The stranger, opening his eyes, and beholding a woman, said, Art thou—pray tell me truly—art thou Isabella of Vicenza? I am, said she: good Heaven restore thee!—Then thou—then thou—said the knight, struggling for utterance—seest—thy father—give me one—Oh! amazement! horror! what do I hear! what do I see! cried Isabella. My father! my father! how came you here, Sir? for Heaven's sake speak!—oh! run for help or he will expire!—'Tis most true, said the wounded knight, exerting all his force; I am Frederic thy father—yes, I came to deliver thee—it will not be—give me a parting kiss, and take—Sir, said Theodore, do not exhaust yourself: suffer us to convey you to the castle.—To the castle! said Isabella; is there no help nearer than the castle? would you expose my father to the tyrant? if he goes thither, I dare not accompany him—and yet, can I leave him?—My child, said Frederic, it matters not to me whether I am carried: a few minutes will place me beyond danger, but while I have eyes to doat on thee, forsake me not, dear Isabella.—This brave knight—I know not who he is, will protect thy innocence—Sir, you will not abandon my child, will you?—Theodore shedding tears over his victim, and vowing to guard the princess at the expense of his life, persuaded Frederic to suffer himself to be conducted to the castle. They placed him on a horse belonging to one of the domestics, after binding up his wounds as well as they were able. Theodore marched by his side; and the afflicted Isabella, who could not bear to quit him, followed mournfully behind.

CHAP. IV.

THE sorrowful troop no sooner arrived at the castle, than they were met by Hippolita and Matilda, whom Isabella had sent one of the domestics before to advertise of their approach. The ladies causing Frederic to be conveyed into the nearest chamber, retired, while the surgeons examined his wounds. Matilda blushed at seeing Theodore and Isabella together; but endeavored to conceal it by embracing the latter, and condoling with her on her father's mischance. The surgeons soon came to acquaint Hippolita that none of the marquis's wounds were dangerous; and that he was desirous of seeing his daughter and the princesses. Theodore, under pretence of expressing his joy at being freed from his apprehensions of the combat being fatal to Frederic, could not resist the impulse of following Matilda. Her eyes were so often cast down on meeting him, that Isabella, who regarded Theodore as attentively as he gazed on Matilda, soon divined who the object was that he had told her in the cave engaged his affections. While this mute scene passed, Hippolita demanded of Frederic the cause of his having taken that mysterious course for reclaiming his daughter; and threw in various apologies to excuse her lord for the match contracted between their children. Frederic, however incensed against Manfred, was not insensible to the courtesy and benevolence of Hippolita; but he was still more struck with the lovely form of Matilda. Wishing to de-

tain them by his bedside, he informed Hippolita of his story. He told her, that while prisoner to the infidels, he had dreamed that his daughter, of whom he had learned no news since his captivity, was detained in a castle, where she was in danger of the most dreadful misfortunes; and that if he obtained his liberty, and repaired to a wood near Joppa, he would learn more. Alarmed at this dream, and incapable of obeying the direction given by it, his chains became more grievous than ever. But while his thoughts were occupied on the means of obtaining his liberty, he received the agreeable news that the confederate princes, who were warring in Palestine, had paid his ransom. He instantly set out for the wood that had been marked in his dream. For three days he and his attendants had wandered in the forest without seeing a human form; but on the evening of the third day they came to a cell, in which they found a venerable hermit in the agonies of death. Applying rich cordials, they brought the saint-like man to his speech. My sons, said he, I am bounden to your charity—but it is in vain—I am going to my eternal rest—yet I die with the satisfaction of performing the will of Heaven. When first I repaired to this solitude, after seeing my country become a prey to unbelievers—it is alas! above fifty years since I was witness to that dreadful scene!—St. Nicholas appeared to me, and revealed a secret, which he bade me never disclose to mortal man, but on my death-bed. This is that tremendous hour, and ye are no doubt the chosen warriors to whom I was ordered to reveal my trust. As soon as ye have done the last offices to this wretched corpse, dig under the green tree on the left hand of this poor cave, and your pains will—Oh! good Heaven receive my soul!—With those words the devout man breathed his last. By break of day, continued Frederic, when we had committed the holy relics to earth, we dug according to direction—but what was our astonishment, when, about the depth of six feet, we discovered an enormous sabre—the very weapon yonder in the court. On the blade, which was then partly out of the scabbard, though since closed by our efforts in removing it, were written the following lines—no; excuse me, madam, added the marquis, turning to Hippolita, if I forbear to repeat them: I respect your sex and rank, and would not be guilty of offending your ear with sounds injurious to aught that is dear to you—He paused. Hippolita trembled. She did not doubt but Frederic was destined by Heaven to accomplish the fate that seemed to threaten her house. Looking with anxious fondness at Matilda, a silent tear stole down her cheek: but recollecting herself, she said—Proceed, my lord: Heaven does nothing in vain: mortals must receive its divine behests with lowliness and submission. It is our part to deprecate its wrath, or bow to its decrees. Repeat the sentence, my lord; we listen resigned.—Frederic was grieved that he had proceeded so far. The dignity and patient firmness of Hippolita penetrated him with respect, and the tender solicitation with which the princess and her daughter regarded each other, melted him almost to tears. Yet apprehensive that his forbearance to obey would be more alarming, he repeated, in a faltering and low voice, the following lines:

Where'er a casque that suits this sword is found,
With perils is thy daughter compass'd round;
Alfonso's blood alone can save the maid,
And quiet a long restless prince's shade.

What is there in these lines, said Theodore impatiently, that affects these princesses? Why were they to be shocked by a mysterious delicacy, that has so little foundation?—Your words are rude, young man, said the marquis; and though fortune has favored you once—My honored lord, said Isabella, who resented Theodore's warmth, which she perceived was dictated by his sentiments for Matilda, discompose not yourself for the glossing of a peasant's son: he forgets the reverence he owes you; but he is not accustomed—Hippolita, concerned at the heat that had arisen, checked Theodore for his boldness, but with an air acknowledging his zeal; and changing the conversation, demanded of Frederic, where he had left her lord? As the marquis was going to reply, they heard a noise without, and rising to inquire the cause, Manfred, Jerome, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumor of what had happened, entered the chamber. Manfred advanced hastily towards Frederic's bed to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumstance of the combat, when, starting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried, Ha! what art thou, thou dreadful spectre! Is my hour come?—My dearest gracious lord, cried Hippolita, clasping him in her arms, what is it you see? why do you fix your eye-balls thus?—What, cried Manfred breathless—dost thou see nothing, Hippolita? Is this ghastly phantom sent to me alone—to me, who did not—For mercy's sweet self, my lord, said Hippolita, resume your soul, command your reason—There is none here, but us, your friends. What! is not that Alfonso? cried Manfred: dost thou not see him? can it be my brain's delirium?—This! my lord, said Hippolita: this is Theodore, the youth who has been so unfortunate—Theodore! said Manfred mournfully, and striking his forehead—Theodore, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of Manfred—But how comes he here? and how comes he in armor?—I believe he went in search of Isabella, said Hippolita.—Of Isabella! said Manfred, relapsing into rage—yes, yes, that is not doubtful—but how did he escape from durance in which I left him? was it Isabella, or this hypocritical old friar, that procured his enlargement?—And would a parent be criminal, my lord, said Theodore, if he meditated the deliverance of his child?—Jerome, amazed to hear himself in a manner accused by his son, and without foundation, knew not what to think. He could not comprehend how Theodore had escaped, how he came to be armed, and to encounter Frederic. Still he would not venture to ask any questions that might tend to inflame Manfred's wrath against his son. Jerome's

silence convinced Manfred that he had contrived Theodore's release.—And is it thus, thou ungrateful old man, said the prince, addressing himself to the friar, that thou repayest mine and Hippolyta's bounties? And not content with traversing my heart's nearest wishes, thou art content with bringing him into my own castle to insult me?—My lord, said Theodore, you wrong my father: nor he nor I are capable of harboring a thought against your peace. Is it insolence thus to surrender myself to your highness's pleasure, added he, laying his sword respectfully at Manfred's feet. Behold my bosom; strike, my lord, if you suspect that a disloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a sentiment engraven on my heart, that does not venerate you and yours. The grace and fervor with which Theodore uttered these words, interested every person present in his favor. Even Manfred was touched—yet still possessed with his remembrance to Alfonso, his admiration was dashed with secret horror. Rise! said he; thy life is not my present purpose.—But tell me thy history, and how thou camest connected with this old traitor here.—My lord, said Jerome eagerly.—Peace! impostor! said Manfred; I will not have him prompted.—My lord, said Theodore, I want no assistance: my story is very brief. I was carried at five years of age to Algiers with my mother, who had been taken by corsairs from the coast of Sicily. She died of grief in less than a twelvemonth—the tears gushed from Jerome's eyes, on whose countenance a thousand anxious passions stood expressed. Before she died, continued Theodore, she bound a writing about my arm under my garments, which told me I was the son of the Count Falconara.—It is most true, said Jerome: I am that wretched father.—Again I enjoin thee silence, said Manfred: proceed.—I remained in slavery, said Theodore, until within these two years, when attending on my master in his cruises, I was delivered by a Christian vessel, which overpowered the pirate; and discovering myself to the captain, he generously put me on shore in Sicily—but, alas! instead of finding a father, I learned that his estate, which was situated on the coast, had, during his absence, been laid waste by the rover, who had carried my mother and me into captivity: that his castle had been burnt to the ground, and that my father on his return had sold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of Naples, but where no man could inform me. Destitute and friendless, hopeless almost of attaining the transport of a parent's embrace, I took the first opportunity of setting sail for Naples, from whence, within these six days, I wandered into this province, still supporting myself by the labor of my hands; nor until yesterday did I believe that Heaven had reserved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. This, my lord, is Theodore's story. I am blessed beyond my hope in finding a father; I am unfortunate beyond my desert in having incurred your highness's displeasure. He ceased. A murmur of approbation gently arose from the audience. This is not all, said Frederic: I am bound in honor to add what he suppresses. Though he is modest, I must be generous—he is one of the bravest youths on Christian ground. He is warm too; and from the short knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myself for his veracity: if what he reports of himself were not true, he would not utter it—and for me, youth, I honor a frankness which becomes thy birth. But now, and thou didst offend me: yet the noble blood which flows in thy veins, may well be allowed to boil out, when it has so recently traced itself to its source. Come, my lord (turning to Manfred), if I can pardon him, surely you may: it is not the youth's fault, if you took him for a spectre. This bitter taunt galled the soul of Manfred.—If beings from another world, replied he haughtily, have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do: nor could a stripling's arm—My lord, interrupted Hippolyta, your guest has occasion for repose: shall we not leave him to his rest? Saying this, and taking Manfred by the hand, she took leave of Frederic, and led the company forth. The prince, not sorry to quit a conversation, which recalled to mind the discovery he had made of his most secret sensations, suffered himself to be conducted to his own apartment, after permitting Theodore, though under engagement to return to the castle on the morrow (a condition the young man gladly accepted), to retire with his father to the convent. Matilda and Isabella were too much occupied with their own reflections, and too little content with each other, to wish for further converse that night. They separated each to her chamber, with more expressions of ceremony and fewer of affection than had passed between them since their childhood.

If they parted with small cordiality, they did but meet with greater impatience, as soon as the sun was risen. Their minds were in a situation that excluded sleep, and each recollected a thousand questions which she wished she had put to the other overnight. Matilda reflected that Isabella had been twice delivered by Theodore in very critical situations, which she could not believe accidental. His eyes, it was true, had been fixed on her in Frederic's chamber; but that might have been to disguise his passion for Isabella from the fathers of both. It were better to clear this up.—She wished to know the truth, lest she should wrong her friend by entertaining a passion for Isabella's lover. Thus jealousy prompted, and at the same time borrowed an excuse from friendship to justify its curiosity.

Isabella, not less restless, had better foundation for her suspicions. Both Theodore's tongue and eyes had told her his heart was engaged—it was true—yet perhaps Matilda might not correspond to his passion—she had ever appeared insensible to love: all her thoughts were set on heaven—why did I dissuade her? said Isabella to herself: I am punished for my generosity—but when did they meet? where?—it cannot be: I have deceived myself—perhaps last night was the first time they ever beheld each other—it must be

some other object that has prepossessed his affections—if it is, I am not so unhappy as I thought; if it is not my friend Matilda—how! can I stoop to wish for the affection of a man, who rudely and unnecessarily acquainted me with his indifference! and that at the very moment in which common courtesy demanded at least expressions of civility? I will go to my dear Matilda, who will confirm me in this becoming pride—man is false—I will advise with her on taking the veil: she will rejoice to find me in this disposition, and I will acquaint her that I no longer oppose her inclination for the cloister. In this frame of mind, and determined to open her heart entirely to Matilda, she went to that princess's chamber, whom she found already dressed, and leaning pensively on her arm. This attitude, so correspondent to what she felt herself, revived Isabella's suspicions, and destroyed the confidence she had supposed to place in her friend. They blushed at meeting, and were too much novices to disguise their sensations with address. After some unmeaning questions and replies, Matilda demanded of Isabella the cause of her flight? the latter, who had almost forgot Manfred's passion, so entirely was she occupied by her own, concluding that Matilda referred to her last escape from the convent, which had occasioned the events of the preceding evening, replied, Martelli brought word to the convent that your mother was dead—Oh! said Matilda, interrupting her, Bianca has explained that mistake to me: on seeing me faint, she cried out, The princess is dead!—And what made you faint? said Isabella, indifferent to the rest.—Matilda blushed, and stammered—My father—he was sitting in judgment on a criminal—What criminal? said Isabella eagerly.—A young man, said Matilda—I believe—I think it was that young man that—What, Theodore, said Isabella.—Yes, answered she: I never saw him before; I do not know how he had offended my father—but as he had been of service to you, I am glad my lord has pardoned him.—Served me! replied Isabella; you term it serving me, to wound my father, and almost occasion his death? Though it is but since yesterday that I am blessed with knowing a parent, I hope Matilda does not think I am such a stranger to filial tenderness as not to resent the boldness of that audacious youth, and that it is impossible for me ever to feel any affection for one who dared to lift his arm against the author of my being. No, Matilda, my heart abhors him; and I you still retain the friendship for me that you have vowed from your infancy, you will detest a man who has been on the point of making me miserable for ever.—Matilda held down her head, and replied: I hope my dearest Isabella does not doubt her Matilda's friendship; I never beheld that youth until yesterday; he is almost a stranger to me: but as the surgeons have pronounced your father out of danger, you ought not to harbor uncharitable resentment against one, who, I am persuaded, did not know the marquis was related to you.—You plead his cause very patriotically, said Isabella, considering he is so much a stranger to you! I am mistaken, or he returns your charity.—What mean you! said Matilda.—Nothing, said Isabella, repenting that she had given Matilda a hint of Theodore's inclination for her. Then, changing the discourse, she asked Matilda what occasioned Manfred to take Theodore for a spectre?—Bless me, said Matilda, did not you observe his extreme resemblance to the portrait of Alfonso in the gallery? I took notice of it to Bianca even before I saw him in armor; but with the helmet on, he is the very image of that picture. I do not much observe pictures, said Isabella: much less have I examined this young man so attentively as you seem to have done.—ah! Matilda your heart is in danger—but let me warn you as a friend—he has owed me that he is in love; it cannot be with you, for yesterday was the first time you ever met—was it not?—Certainly, replied Matilda; but why does my dearest Isabella conclude from any thing I have said, that she paused—then continuing; he saw you first, and I am far from having the vanity to think that my little portion of charms could engage a heart devoted to you—may you be happy Isabella, whatever is the fate of Matilda.—My lovely friend, said Isabella, whose heart was too honest to resist a kind expression, it is you that Theodore admires; I saw it; I am persuaded of it; nor shall a thought of my own happiness suffer me to interfere with yours. This frankness drew tears from the gentle Matilda; and jealousy, that for a moment had raised a coolness between these amiable maidens, soon gave way to the natural sincerity and candor of their souls. Each confessed to the other the impression that Theodore had made on her; and this confidence was followed by a struggle of generosity, each insisting on yielding her claim to her friend. At length the dignity of Isabella's virtue reminding her of the preference which Theodore had almost declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her passion, and cede the beloved object to her friend.

During this contest of amity, Hippolyta entered her daughter's chamber. Madam, said she to Isabella, you have so much tenderness for Matilda, and interest yourself so kindly in whatever affects your wretched house, that I can have no secrets with my child which are not proper for you to hear. The princesses were all attention and anxiety. Know then, Madam, continued Hippolyta, and you, my dearest Matilda, that being convinced by all the events of these two last ominous days that Heaven purposes the sceptre of Otranto should pass from Manfred's hands into those of the marquis Frederic, I have been perhaps inspired with the thought of averting our total destruction by the union of our rival houses. With this view I have been proposing to Manfred my lord to tender this dear, dear child to Frederic your father—Me to Lord Frederic! cried Matilda—good heavens! my gracious mother—and have you named it to my father!—I have, said Hippolyta: he listened benignly to my proposal, and is gone to break it to the marquis.—Ah! wretched princess, cried Isabella, what hast thou done! what ruin has thy in-

advertent goodness been preparing for thyself, for me, and for Matilda!—Ruin from me, to you, and to my child! said Hippolyta; what can this mean?—Alas! said Isabella, the purity of your own heart prevents your seeing the depravity of others. Manfred, your lord, that impious man—Hold! said Hippolyta, you must not in my presence, young lady, mention Manfred with disrespect: he is my lord and husband, and—Will not long be so, said Isabella, if his wicked purposes can be carried into execution.—This language amazes me, said Hippolyta. Your feeling, Isabella, is warm: but until this hour I never knew it to betray you into intemperance. What deed of Manfred authorizes you to treat him as a murderer, an assassin?—Thou virtuous, and too credulous princess! replied Isabella; it is not thy life he aims at—it is to separate himself from thee! to divorce thee! to—To divorce me! To divorce my mother! cried Hippolyta and Matilda at once.—Yes, said Isabella; and, to complete his crime, he meditates—I cannot speak it!—What can surpass what thou hast already uttered? said Matilda. Hippolyta was silent. Grief choked her speech; and the recollection of Manfred's late ambiguous discourses confirmed what she heard. Excellent, dear lady!—Madam! mother! cried Isabella, flinging herself at Hippolyta's feet in a transport of passion; trust me, believe me, I will die a thousand deaths sooner than consent to injure you, than yield to so odious—oh!—This is too much! cried Hippolyta. What crimes does one crime suggest! Rise, dear Isabella; I do not doubt your virtue. Oh! Matilda, this stroke is too heavy for thee! weep not, my child; and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is thy father still!—But you are my mother too, said Matilda, fervently; and you are virtuous, you are guiltless! Oh! must not I, must not I complain?—You must not, said Hippolyta—come, all will yet be well. Manfred, in the agony for the loss of thy brother, knew not what he said: perhaps Isabella misunderstood him: his heart is good—and, my child, thou knowest not all! There is a destiny hangs over us: the hand of Providence is stretched out—Oh! could I but save thee from the wreck!—yes, continued she, in a firmer tone; perhaps the sacrifice of myself may atone for all—I will go and offer myself to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighboring monastery, and waste the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child and—the prince!—Thou art as much too good for this world, said Isabella, as Manfred is execrable—but think not, lady, that thy weakness shall determine for me. I swear, hear me, all ye angels—Stop, I adjure thee, cried Hippolyta: remember thou dost not depend on thyself; thou hast a father—My father is too pious, too noble, interrupted Isabella, to command an impious deed. But should he command it; can a father enjoin a cursed act? I was contracted to the son, can I wed the father?—No, Madam, no; force should not drag me to Manfred's hated bed. I loathe him, I abhor him: divine and human laws forbid—and my friend, my dearest Matilda! would I wound her tender soul by injuring her adored mother? my own mother—I never have known another.—Oh! she is the mother of both! cried Matilda: can we, can we, Isabella, adore her too much?—My lovely children, said the touched Hippolyta, your tenderness overpowers me—but I must not give way to it. It is not ours to make election for ourselves: Heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us. Have patience until you hear what Manfred and Frederic have determined. If the marquis accepts Matilda's hand, I know she will readily obey. Heaven may interpose and prevent the rest. What means my child? continued she, seeing Matilda fall at her feet with a flood of speechless tears.—But no; answer me not, my daughter: I must not hear a word against the pleasure of thy father.—Oh! doubt not my obedience, my dreadful obedience to him and to you! said Matilda. But can I, most respected of women, can I experience all this tenderness, this world of goodness, and conceal a thought from the best of mothers?—What art thou going to utter? said Isabella trembling. Recollect thyself, Matilda.—No, Isabella, said the princess, I should not deserve this incomparable parent, if the inmost recesses of my soul harbored a thought without her permission—may, I have offended her: I have suffered a passion to enter my heart without her avowal—but here I disclaim it; here I vow to Heaven and her—My child! my child! said Hippolyta, what words are those! what new calamities has fate in store for us! Thou a passion! Thou, in this hour of destruction—Oh! I see all my guilt, said Matilda. I abhor myself, if I cost my mother a pang. She is the dearest thing I have on earth—Oh! I will never, never behold him more!—Isabella, said Hippolyta, thou art conscious to this unhappy secret, whatever it is. Speak!—What! cried Matilda, have I so forfeited my mother's love, that she will not permit me even to speak my own guilt? Oh! wretched, wretched Matilda!—Thou art too cruel, said Isabella to Hippolyta: canst thou behold this anguish of a virtuous mind, and not commiserate it?—Not pity my child! said Hippolyta, catching Matilda in her arms.—Oh! I know she is good, she is all virtue, all tenderness and duty. I do forgive thee, my excellent, my only hope! The princesses then, revealed to Hippolyta their mutual inclination for Theodore, and the purpose of Isabella to resign him to Matilda. Hippolyta blamed their imprudence, and showed them the improbability that either father would consent to bestow his heiress on so poor a man, though nobly born. Some comfort it gave her to find their passion of so recent a date, and that Theodore had had but little cause to suspect it in either. She strictly enjoined them to avoid all correspondence with him. This Matilda fervently promised; but Isabella, who flattered herself that she meant no more than to promote his union with her friend, could not determine to avoid him; and made no reply. I will go to the convent, said Hippolyta, and order new masses to be said for a deliverance from these calamities.

Oh! my mother, said Matilda, you mean to quit us: you mean to take sanctuary, and to give my father an opportunity of pursuing his fatal intention. Alas! on my knees I supplicate you to forbear—will you leave me a prey to Frederic? I will follow you to the convent—Be at peace, my child, said Hippolita; I will return instantly. I will never abandon thee, until I know it is the will of Heaven, and for thy benefit.—Do not deceive me, said Matilda. I will not marry Frederic until thou commandest it. Alas! what will become of me?—Why that exclamation? said Hippolita. I have promised thee to return—Ah! my mother, replied Matilda, stay and save me from myself. A frown from thee can do more than all my father's severity. I have given away my heart, and you alone can make me recall it. No more, said Hippolita: thou must not relapse, Matilda.—I can quit Theodore, said she, but must I wed another? let me attend thee to the altar, and shut myself from the world for ever.—Thy fate depends on thy father, said Hippolita: I have ill bestowed my tenderness, if it has taught thee to revere aught beyond him. Adieu! my child: I go to pray for thee.

Hippolita's real purpose was to demand of Jerome, whether in conscience she might not consent to the divorce. She had often urged Manfred to resign the principality, which the delicacy of her conscience rendered an hourly burden to her. These scruples concurred to make the separation from her husband appear less dreadful to her, than it would have seemed in any other situation.

Jerome, at quitting the castle overnight, had questioned Theodore severely why he had accused him to Manfred of being privy to his escape. Theodore owned it had been with design to prevent Manfred's suspicion from alighting on Matilda; and added, the holiness of Jerome's life and character secured him from the tyrant's wrath. Jerome was heartily grieved to discover his son's inclination for that princess; and leaving him to his rest, promised in the morning to acquaint him with important reasons for concurring his passion. Theodore, like Isabella, was too recently acquainted with parental authority to submit to its decisions against the impulse of his heart. He had little curiosity to learn the friar's reasons, and less disposition to obey them. The lovely Matilda had made stronger impressions on him than filial affection. All night he pleased himself with visions of love; and it was not till late after the morning-office, that he recollected the friar's commands to attend him at Alfonso's tomb.

Young man, said Jerome, when he saw him, this tardiness does not please me. Have a father's commands already so little weight? Theodore made awkward excuses, and attributed his delay to having overlept himself. And on whom were thy dreams employed? said the friar sternly. His son blushed. Come, come, resumed the friar, inconsiderate youth, this must not be: eradicate this guilty passion from thy breast—Guilty passion! cried Theodore: can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modesty?—It is sinful, replied the friar, to cherish those whom Heaven has doomed to destruction. A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation. Will Heaven visit the innocent for the crimes of the guilty? said Theodore. The fair Matilda has virtue enough—to undo thee—interrupted Jerome. Hast thou so soon forgotten that twice the savage Manfred has pronounced thy sentence?—Nor have I forgotten, Sir, said Theodore, that the charity of his daughter delivered me from his power. I can forget injuries, but never benefits.—The injuries thou hast received from Manfred's race, said the friar, are beyond what thou canst conceive. Reply not, but view this holy image! Beneath this marble monument rest the ashes of the good Alfonso; a prince adorned with every virtue: the father of his people! the delight of mankind! Kneel, headstrong boy, and list, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every sentiment from thy soul, but sensations of sacred vengeance.—Alfonso! much injured prince! let thy unsatisfied shade sit awful on the troubled air, while these trembling lips—Ha! who comes there?—The most wretched of women, said Hippolita, entering the choir. Good father, art thou at leisure?—but why this kneeling youth? what means the horror imprinted on each countenance? why at this venerable tomb—alas! hast thou seen aught?—We were pouring forth our orisons to Heaven, replied the friar with some confusion, to put an end to the woes of this deplorable province. Join with us, lady! thy spotless soul may obtain an exemption from the judgments which the portents of these days but too speakingly denounce against thy house.—I pray fervently to Heaven to divert them, said the pious princess. Thou knowest it has been the occupation of my life to wrest a blessing for my lord and my harmless children.—One, alas! is taken from me! would Heaven but hear me for my poor Matilda! Father, intercede for her!—Every heart will bless her! cried Theodore with rapture—Be dumb, rash youth! said Jerome. And thou, fond princess, contend not with the powers above! the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: Bless his holy name, and submit to his decrees.—I do most devoutly, said Hippolita; but will he not spare my only comfort? must Matilda perish too?—Ah, father, I came—but dismiss thy son. No ear but thine must hear what I have to utter.—May heaven grant thy every wish, most excellent princess! said Theodore, retiring. Jerome frowned.

Hippolita then acquainted the friar with the proposal she had suggested to Manfred, his approbation of it, and the tender of Matilda that he was gone to make to Frederic. Jerome could not conceal his dislike of the motion, which he covered under pretence of the improbability that Frederic, the nearest of blood to Alfonso, and who was come to claim his right. But nothing could equal the perplexity of the friar, when Hippolita confessed her readiness not to oppose the separation, and demanded his opinion on the legality of her acquiescence. The friar caught eagerly at her request of his

advice, and without explaining his aversion to the proposed marriage of Manfred and Isabella, he painted to Hippolita in the most alarming colors, the sinfulness of her consent, denounced judgments against her if she complied, and enjoined her in the severest terms to treat any such propositions with every mark of indignation and refusal.

Manfred, in the mean time, had broken his purpose to Frederic, and proposed the double marriage. That weak prince, who had been struck with the charms of Matilda, listened but too eagerly to the offer. He forgot his enmity to Manfred, whom he saw but little hope of dispossessing by force; and flattering himself that no issue might succeed from the union of his daughter with the tyrant, he looked upon his own succession to the principality as facilitated by wedding Matilda. He made faint opposition to the proposal; affecting, for form only, not to acquiesce unless Hippolita should consent to the divorce. Manfred took that upon himself. Transported with his success, and impatient to see himself in a situation to expect sons, he hastened to his wife's apartment, determined to extort her compliance. He learned with indignation that she was absent at the convent. His guilt suggested to him that she had probably been informed by Isabella of his purpose. He doubted whether her retirement to the convent did not import an intention of remaining there, until she could raise obstacles to their divorce; and the suspicions he had already entertained of Jerome, made him apprehend that the friar would not only traverse his views, but might have inspired Hippolita with the resolution of taking sanctuary. Impatient to unravel this clue, and to defeat its success, Manfred hastened to the convent, and arrived there, as the friar was earnestly exhorting the princess never to yield to the divorce.

Madam, said Manfred, what business drew you hither? why did you not await my return from the marquis?—I came to implore a blessing on your councils, replied Hippolita. My councils do not need a friar's intervention, said Manfred—and of all men living, is that hoary traitor the only one whom you delight to confer with? Profane prince! said Jerome: is it at the altar that thou chooseth to insult the servants of the altar?—but, Manfred, thy impious schemes are known. Heaven and this virtuous lady know them,—nay, frown not, prince. The church despises thy menaces. Her thunders will be heard above thy wrath. Dare to proceed in thy cursed purpose of a divorce, until her sentence be known, and here I launch her anathema at thy head.—Audacious rebel! said Manfred, endeavoring to conceal the awe with which the friar's words inspired him; dost thou presume to threaten thy lawful prince?—Thou art no lawful prince, said Jerome; thou art no prince—go, discuss thy claim with Frederic; and when that is done—It is done, replied Manfred: Frederic accepts Matilda's hand, and is content to waive his claim, unless I have no male issue:—as he spoke those words three drops of blood fell from the nose of Alfonso's statue. Manfred turned pale, and the princess sunk on her knees. Behold! said the friar; mark this miraculous indication that the blood of Alfonso will never mix with that of Manfred! My gracious lord, said Hippolita, let us submit ourselves to Heaven. Think not thy ever-obedient wife rebels against thy authority. I have no will but that of my lord and the church. To that reverend tribunal let us appeal. It does not depend on us to burst the bonds that unite us. If the church shall approve the dissolution of our marriage, be it so. I have but few years, and those of sorrow, to pass. Where can they be worn away so well as at the foot of this altar, in prayers for thine and Matilda's safety?—But thou shalt not remain here until then, said Manfred. Repair with me to the castle, and there I will advise on the proper measures for a divorce;—but this meddling friar comes not thither: my hospitable roof shall never more harbor a traitor.—and for thy reverence's off-spring, continued he, I banish him from my dominions. He, I ween, is no sacred personage, nor under the protection of the church. Whoever weds Isabella, it shall not be father Falconara's started-up son.—They start up, said the friar, who are suddenly beheld in the seat of lawful princes; but they wither away like the grass, and their place knows them no more. Manfred, casting a look of scorn at the friar, led Hippolita forth; but at the door of the church, whispered one of his attendants to remain concealed about the convent, and bring him instant notice, if any one from the castle should repair thither.

CHAP. V.

EVERY reflection which Manfred made on the friar's behavior, conspired to persuade him that Jerome was privy to an amour between Isabella and Theodore. But Jerome's new presumption, so dissonant from his former meekness, suggested still deeper apprehensions. The prince even suspected that the friar depended on some secret support from Frederic, whose arrival coincided with the novel appearance of Theodore, seemed to bespeak a correspondence. Still more was he troubled with the resemblance of Theodore to Alfonso's portrait. The latter he knew had unquestionably died without issue. Frederic had consented to bestow Isabella on him. These contradictions agitated his mind with numberless pangs. He saw but two methods of extricating himself from his difficulties. The one was to resign his dominions to the marquis—Pride, ambition, and his reliance on ancient prophecies, which had pointed out a possibility of his preserving them to his posterity, combated that thought. The other was to press his marriage with Isabella. After long ruminating on these anxious thoughts, as he marched silently with Hippolita to the castle, he at last discoursed with that princess on the subject of his disquiet, and used every insinuating and plausible argument to extract her consent to, even her promise of promoting, the

divorce. Hippolita needed little persuasions to bend her to his pleasure. She endeavored to win him over to the measure of resigning his dominions; but finding her exhortations fruitless, she assured him, that as far as her conscience would allow, she would raise no opposition to a separation, though without better founded scruples than what he yet alleged, she would not engage to be active in demanding it.

This compliance, though inadequate, was sufficient to raise Manfred's hopes. He trusted that his power and wealth would easily advance his suit at the court of Rome, whither he resolved to engage Frederic to take a journey on purpose. That prince had discovered so much passion for Matilda, that Manfred hoped to obtain all he wished by holding out or withdrawing his daughter's charms, according as the marquis should appear more or less disposed to co-operate in his views. Even the absence of Frederic would be a material point gained, until he could take farther measures for his security.

Dismissing Hippolita to her apartment, he repaired to that of the marquis; but crossing the great hall, through which he was to pass, he met Bianca. The damsel he knew was in the confidence of both the young ladies. It immediately occurred to him to sit her on the subject of Isabella and Theodore. Calling her aside into the recess of the oriel window of the hall, and soothing her with many fair words and promises, he demanded of her whether she knew aught of the state of Isabella's affections. I! my lord! no, my lord—yes, my lord—poor lady! she is wonderfully alarmed about her father's wounds! but I tell her he will do well—don't your highness think so?—I do not ask you, replied Manfred, what she thinks about her father: but you are in her secrets: come, be a good girl, and tell me: is there any young man—he!—you understand me.—Lord bless me! understand your highness! no, not I: I told her a few vulnerary herbs and repose.—I am not talking, replied the prince impatiently, about her father: I know he will do well.—Bless me, I rejoice to hear your highness say so: for though I thought it not right to let my young lady depend, methought his greatness had a wan look, and a something—I remember when young Ferdinand was wounded by the Venetian—Thou answerest from the point, interrupted Manfred; but here, take this jewel, perhaps that may fix thy attention; nay, no reverences; my favor shall not stop here.—come, tell me truly, how stands Isabella's heart.—Well! your highness has such a way! said Bianca—to be sure—but can your highness keep a secret? if it should ever come out of your lips—It shall not, it shall not, cried Manfred—Nay, but swear, your highness—By by halidoms, if it should ever be known that I said it—Why, truth is truth, I do not think my Lady Isabella ever much affected my young lord, your son—yet he was a sweet youth as one should see.—I am sure, if I had been a princess—but bless me! I must attend my Lady Matilda: she will marvel what is become of me.—Stay! cried Manfred; thou hast not satisfied my question. Hast thou ever carried any message, any letter—I! good gracious! cried Bianca; I carry a letter? I would not to be a queen. I hope your highness thinks, though I am poor, I am honest—did your highness never hear what Count Marsigli offered me, when he came a wooing to my Lady Matilda?—I have not leisure, said Manfred, to listen to thy tale. I do not question thy honesty; but it is thy duty to conceal nothing from me. How long has Isabella been acquainted with Theodore?—Nay, there is nothing can escape your highness! said Bianca—not that I know any thing of the matter—Theodore, to be sure, is a proper young man, and, as my Lady Matilda says, the very image of good Alfonso: has not your highness remarked it?—Yes, yes, No—thou torturerest me, said Manfred: where did they meet? when?—Who? my Lady Matilda? said Bianca.—No, no, not Matilda: Isabella—when did Isabella first become acquainted with this Theodore?—Virgin Mary! said Bianca, how should I know?—Thou dost know, said Manfred; and I must know: I will—Lord! your highness is not jealous of young Theodore! said Bianca.—Jealous! no, no: why should I be jealous? perhaps I mean to unite them.—If I were sure Isabella would have no repentance—Repentance? no, I'll warrant her, said Bianca: he is as comely a youth as ever trod on Christian ground. We are all in love with him: there is not a soul in the castle, but would be rejoiced to have him for our prince.—I mean, when it shall please Heaven to call your highness to itself.—Indeed! said Manfred, has it gone so far? oh! this cursed friar!—but I must not lose time—go, Bianca, attend Isabella; but I charge thee, not a word of what has passed. Find out how she is affected towards Theodore: bring me good news, and that ring has a companion. Wait at the foot of the winding staircase: I am going to visit the marquis, and will talk farther with thee at thy return.

Manfred, after some general conversation, desired Frederic to dismiss the two knights his companions, having to talk with him on urgent affairs. As soon as they were alone, he began in artful guise to sound the marquis on the subject of Matilda; and finding him disposed to his wish, he let drop hints on the difficulties that would attend the celebration of their marriage, unless—at that instant Bianca burst into the room with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror. Oh! my lord, my lord! cried she: we are all undone! it is come again! it is come again!—What is come again? cried Manfred amazed.—Oh! the hand! the giant! the hand!—support me! I am terrified out of my senses, cried Bianca. I will not sleep in the castle to night. Where shall I go? my things may come after me to-morrow—would I had been content to wed Francisco! this comes of ambition!—What has terrified thee thus, young woman? said the marquis: thou art safe here; be not alarmed.—Oh! your greatness is wonderfully good, said

Bianca, but I dare not—no, pray let me go—I had rather leave every thing behind me, than stay another hour under this roof—Go to, thou hast lost thy senses; said Manfred, interrupt us not; we were communing on important matters—My lord, this wench is subject to fits—Come with me, Bianca—oh! the saints! No, said Bianca—for certain it comes to warn your highness; why should it appear to me else? I say my prayers morning and evening—oh! if your highness had believed Diego! 'Tis the same hand that he saw the foot to in the gallery-chamber—Father Jerome has often told us the prophecy would be out one of these days—Bianca, said he, mark my words—Thou ravest! said Manfred in a rage; begone, and keep these fooleries to frighten thy companions—What! my lord, cried Bianca, do you think I have seen nothing? go to the foot of the great stairs yourself—as I live I saw it—Saw what? tell us, fair maid, what thou hast seen, said Frederic—Can your highness listen, said Manfred, to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them?—This is more than fancy, said the marquis; her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus—Yes, my lord, thank your greatness, said Bianca—I believe I look very pale; I shall be better when I have recovered myself—I was going to my Lady Isabella's chamber by his highness's order—We do not want the circumstances, interrupted Manfred: since his highness will have it so, proceed; but be brief—Lord! your highness thwarts one so! replied Bianca—I fear my hair—I am sure I never in my life—well! as I was telling your greatness, I was going by his highness's order to my Lady Isabella's chamber: she lies in the watch-colored chamber, on the right hand, one pair of stairs: so when I came to the great stairs—I was looking on his highness's presence here—Grant me patience! said Manfred, will this wench never come to the point? what imports it to the marquis that I gave thee a hauberk for thy faithful attendance on my daughter? we want to know what thou sawest—I was going to tell your highness, said Bianca, if you would permit me—So as I was rubbing the ring—I am sure I had not gone up three steps, but I heard the rattling of armor; for all the world such a clatter, as Diego says he heard when the giant turned him about in the gallery-chamber—What does she mean, my lord! said the marquis: is your castle haunted by giants and goblins?—Lord, what, has not your greatness heard the story of the giant in the gallery-chamber? cried Bianca. I marvel his highness has not told—mayhap you do not know there is a prophecy—This trifling is intolerable, interrupted Manfred. Let us dismiss this silly wench, my lord! we have more important affairs to discuss—By your favor, said Frederic, these are no trifles—the enormous sabre I was directed to in the wood, von casque, its fellow—are these visions of this poor maiden's brain?—So Jaquez thinks, may it please your greatness, said Bianca. He says this moon will not be out without our seeing some strange revolution. For my part, I should not be surprised if it was to happen to-morrow; for, as I was saying, when I heard the clattering of armor, I was all in a cold sweat—I looked up, and, if your greatness will believe me, I saw upon the uppermost battlement of the great stairs a hand in armor as big, as big—I thought I should have swooned—I never stop until I came higher—would I were well out of this castle! My Lady Matilda told me that yesterday-morning that her highness Hippolyta knows something—Thou art an insolent! cried Manfred—Lord marquis, it much misgives me that this scene is concerted to affront me. Are my own domestics suborned to spread tales injurious to my honor? Pursue your claim by manly daring; or let us bury our feuds, as was proposed, by the intermarriage of our children: but trust me, it will become a prince of your bearing to practise on mercenary wenchery—I scorn your imputation, said Frederic: until this hour I never set eyes on this damsel: I have given her no jewel—my lord, my lord, your conscience, your guilt accuses you, and you would throw the suspicion on me—But keep your daughter, and think no more of Isabella. The judgments already fallen on your house forbid me matching into it.

Manfred, alarmed at the resolute tone in which Frederic delivered these words, endeavored to pacify him. Dismissing Bianca, he made such submissions to the marquis, and threw in such artful encomiums on Matilda, that Frederic was once more staggered. However, as his passion was of so recent a date, it could not at once surmount the scruples he had conceived. He had gathered enough from Bianca's discourse to persuade him that Heaven declared itself against Manfred. The proposed marriage too removed his claim to a distance; and the principality of Otranto was a stronger temptation, than the contingent reversion of it with Matilda. Still he would not absolutely recede from his engagements; but purposing to gain time, he demanded of Manfred if it was true in fact that Hippolyta consented to the divorce? The prince, transported to find no other obstacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, assured the marquis it was so, and that he might satisfy himself of the truth from her own mouth.

As they were thus discoursing, word was brought that the banquet was prepared. Manfred conducted Frederic to the great hall, where they were received by Hippolyta and the young princesses. Manfred placed the marquis next to Matilda, and seated himself between his wife and Isabella. Hippolyta composed herself with an easy gravity; but the young ladies were silent and melancholy. Manfred, who was determined to pursue his point with the marquis in the remainder of the evening, pushed on the feast until it waxed late; affecting unrestrained gaiety, and plying Frederic with repeated goblets of wine. The latter, more upon his guard than Manfred wished, declined his frequent challenges,

ges, on pretence of his late loss of blood; while the prince, to raise his own disordered spirits, and to counterfeit unconcern, indulged himself in plentiful draughts, though not to the intoxication of his senses.

The evening being far advanced, the banquet concluded. Manfred would have withdrawn with Frederic: but the latter pleading weakness and want of repose, retired to his chamber, gallantly telling the prince, that his daughter should amuse his highness until himself could attend him. Manfred accepted the party, and to the no small grief of Isabella, accompanied her to her apartment. Matilda waited on her mother to enjoy the freshness of the evening on the ramparts of the castle.

Soon as the company were dispersed their several ways, Frederic, quitting his chamber, inquired if Hippolyta was alone, and was told by one of her attendants, who had not noticed her going forth, that at that hour she generally withdrew to her oratory, where he probably would find her. The marquis during the repast had beheld Matilda with increase of passion. He now wished to find Hippolyta in the disposition her lord had promised. The portents that had alarmed him were forgotten in his desires. Stealing softly and unobserved to the apartment of Hippolyta, he entered it with a resolution to encourage her acquiescence to the divorce, having perceived that Manfred was resolved to make the possession of Isabella an unalterable condition, before he would grant Matilda to his wishes.

The marquis was not surprised at the silence that reigned in the princess's apartment. Concluding her, as he had been advertised, in her oratory, he passed on. The door was ajar; the evening gloomy and overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whose back was towards him. The person seemed absorbed in prayer. The marquis was about to return, when the figure rising, stood some moments fixed in meditation, without regarding him. The marquis, expecting the holy person to come forth, and meaning to excuse his uncivil interruption, said, Reverend father, I sought the Lady Hippolyta—Hippolyta! replied a hollow voice: camest thou to this castle to seek Hippolyta?—and then the figure turning slowly round, discovered to Frederic the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl. Angels of grace, protect me! cried Frederic, recoiling—Deserve thy protection! said the spectre. Frederic, falling on his knees, adjoined the phantom to take pity on him. Dost thou not remember me? said the apparition. Remember the wood of Joppa—Art thou that holy hermit? cried Frederic, trembling—can I do aught for thy eternal peace?—Wast thou delivered from bondage, said the spectre, to pursue carnal delights? Hast thou forgotten the buried sabre, and the behest of Heaven engraven on it?—I have not, I have not, said Frederic—but say, blest spirit, what is thy errand to me? what remains to be done?—To forget Matilda! said the apparition—and vanished.

Frederic's blood froze in his veins. For some minutes he remained motionless. Then falling prostrate on his face before the altar, he besought the intercession of every saint for pardon. A flood of tears succeeded to this transport; and the image of the beauteous Matilda rushing in spite of him on his thoughts, he lay on the ground in a conflict of penitence and passion. Ere he could recover from this agony of his spirits, the Princess Hippolyta, with a taper in her hand, entered the oratory alone. Seeing a man without motion on the floor, she gave a shriek, concluding him dead. Her fright brought Frederic to himself. Rising suddenly, his face bedewed with tears he would have rushed from her presence; but Hippolyta stopping him, conjured him in the most plaintive accents to explain the cause of his disorder, and by what strange chance she had found him there in that posture.—Ah! virtuous princess! said the marquis, penetrated with grief—and stopped. For the love of Heaven, my lord, said Hippolyta, disclose the cause of this transport! what mean these doleful sounds, this alarming exclamation on my name? What woes has heaven still in store for the wretched Hippolyta?—yet silent!—By every pitying angel, I adjure thee, noble prince, continued she, falling at his feet, to disclose the purport of what lies at thy heart—I see thou feelest for me; thou feelest the sharp pangs that thou inflictest—speak for pity! does aught thou knowest concern my child?—I cannot speak, cried Frederic, bursting from her—oh! Matilda!

Quitting the princess thus abruptly, he hastened to his own apartment. At the door of it he was accosted by Manfred, who, flushed by wine and love, had come to seek him, and to propose to waste some hours of the night in music and reveling. Frederic, offended at an invitation so dissonant from the mood of his soul, pushed him rudely aside, and entering his chamber, flung the door intertemporarily against Manfred, and bolted it inward. The haughty prince, enraged at this unaccountable behavior, withdrew in a frame of mind capable of the most fatal excesses. As he crossed the court, he was met by the domestic whom he planted at the convent as a spy on Jerome and Theodore. This man, almost breathless with the haste he had made, informed his lord, that Theodore and some lady from the castle were at that instant in private conference at the tomb of Alfonso in St. Nicholas's church. He had dogged Theodore thither, but the gloominess of the night had prevented his discovering who the woman was.

Manfred, whose spirits were inflamed, and whom Isabella had driven from her on his urging his passion with too little reserve, did not doubt but the inquietude she had expressed, had been occasioned by her impatience to meet Theodore. Provoked by this conjecture, and enraged at her father, he hastened secretly to the great church. Gliding softly between the aisles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows, he stole towards the tomb of Alfonso, to which he was directed by in-

distinct whispers of the persons he sought. The first sounds he could distinguish were—Does it, alas! depend on me? Manfred will never permit our union—No, this shall prevent it! cried the tyrant, drawing his dagger, and plunging it over her shoulder into the bosom of the person that spoke—Ah! me, I am slain! cried Matilda sinking; good Heaven, receive my soul! Savage, inhuman monster! what hast thou done! cried Theodore, rushing on him, and wrenching his dagger from him—Stop, stop thy impious hand! cried Matilda; it is my father! Manfred, waking as from a trance, beat his breast, twisted his hands in his locks, and endeavored to recover his dagger from Theodore to dispatch himself. Theodore scarce less distressed, and only mastering the transports of his grief to assist Matilda, had now by his cries drawn some of the monks to his aid. While part of them endeavored in concert with the afflicted Theodore to stop the blood of the dying princess, the rest prevented Manfred from laying violent hands on himself.

Matilda resigning herself patiently to her fate, acknowledged with looks of grateful love the zeal of Theodore. Yet oft as her faintness would permit her speech its way, she begged the assistants to comfort her father. Jerome by this time had learnt the fatal news, and reached the church. His looks seemed to reproach Theodore: but turning to Manfred, he said, Now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of Alfonso cried to Heaven for vengeance; and Heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by assassination, that thou mightest shed thy own blood at the foot of that prince's sepulchre!—Cruel man! cried Matilda, to aggravate the woes of a parent! may Heaven bless my father, and forgive him as I do! My lord, my gracious sire, dost thou forgive thy child? Indeed I came not hither to meet Theodore! I found him praying at this tomb, whither my mother sent me to intercede for thee, for her—dearest father, bless your child, and say you forgive her—Forgive thee! murderous monster! cried Manfred—can assassins forgive? I took thee for Isabella; but Heaven directed my bloody hand to the heart of my child—oh! Matilda—I cannot utter it—canst thou forgive the blindness of my rage?—I can, I do! and may Heaven confirm it! said Matilda—but while I have life to ask it—Oh! my mother! what will she feel!—will you comfort her, my lord! will you not put her away? indeed alas! loves you—oh! I am faint! bear me to the castle—can I live to have her close my eyes?

Theodore and the monks besought her earnestly to suffer herself to be borne into the convent; but her instances were so pressing to be carried to the castle, that placing her on a litter, they conveyed her thither as she requested. Theodore supporting her head with his arm, and hanging over her in an agony of despairing love, still endeavored to inspire her with hopes of life. Jerome on the other side comforted her with discourses of heaven, and holding a crucifix before her, which she bathed with innocent tears, prepared her for her passage to immortality. Manfred, plunged in the deepest affliction, followed the litter in despair.

Ere they reached the castle, Hippolyta, informed of the dreadful catastrophe, had flown to meet her murdered child; but when she saw the afflicted procession, the mightiness of her grief deprived her of her senses, and she fell lifeless to the earth in a swoon. Isabella and Frederic, who attended her, were overwhelmed in almost equal sorrow. Matilda alone seemed insensible to her own situation: every thought was lost in tenderness for her mother. Ordering the litter to stop, as soon as Hippolyta was brought to herself, she asked for her father. He approached, unable to speak. Matilda, seizing his hand and her mother's, locked them in her own, and then clasped them to her heart. Manfred could not support this act of pathetic piety. He dashed himself on the ground, and cursed the day he was born. Isabella, apprehensive that these struggles of passion were more than Matilda could support, took upon herself to order Manfred to be borne to his apartment, while she caused Matilda to be conveyed to the nearest chamber. Hippolyta scarce more alive than her daughter, was regardless of every thing but her; but when the tender Isabella's care would have likewise removed her, while the surgeons examined Matilda's wound, she cried, Remove me! never! never! I lived but in her, and will expire with her. Matilda raised her eyes at her mother's voice, but closed them again without speaking. Her sinking pulse, and the damp coldness of her hand, soon dispelled all hopes of recovery. Theodore followed the surgeons into the outer chamber, and heard them pronounce the fatal sentence with a transport equal to frenzy—Since she cannot live, cried he, at least she shall be mine in death! Father! Jerome! will you not join our hands? cried he to the friar, who with the marquis had accompanied the surgeons.—What means thy distracted rashness? said Jerome: is this an hour for marriage?—It is, it is, cried Theodore; alas! there is no other!—Young man, thou art too unadvised; said Frederic: dost thou think we are to listen to thy fond transports in this hour of fate? what pretensions hast thou to the princess?—Those of a prince: said Theodore; of the sovereignty of Otranto. This reverend man, my father, has informed me who I am.—Thou ravest; said the marquis: there is no Prince of Otranto but myself, now Manfred by murder, by sacrilegious murder, has forfeited all pretensions.—My lord, said Jerome, assuming an air of command, he tells you true. It was not my purpose the secret should have been divulged so soon; but fate presses onward to its work. What his hot-headed passion has revealed, my tongue confirms. Know, prince, that when Alfonso set sail for the Holy Land—Is this a season for explanations? cried Theodore. Father, come and unite me to the princess; she shall be mine—In every other thing I will dutifully obey you. My life! my adored Matilda! continued Theodore, rushing back into the inner chamber, will you not be

mine? will you not bless your—Isabella made signs to him to be silent, apprehending the princess was near her end. What, is she dead? cried Theodore; is it possible! The violence of his exclamations brought Matilda to herself. Lifting up her eyes, she looked round for her mother—Life of my soul! I am here, cried Hippolita; think not I will quit thee!—Oh! you are too good, said Matilda—but weep not for me, my mother! I am going where sorrow never dwells—Isabella, thou hast loved me: woe! thou not supply my fondness to this dear, dear woman?—indeed I am faint!—Oh! my child! my child! said Hippolita in a flood of tears, can I not withhold thee a moment?—It will not be; said Matilda—commend me to heaven—where is my father? Forgive him, dearest mother—forgive him my death; it was an error—Oh! I had forgotten, dearest mother, I vowed never to see Theodore more—perhaps that has drawn down this calamity—but it was not intentional—can you pardon me?—Oh! wound not my agonizing soul! said Hippolita; thou never couldst offend me—Alas! she faints! help! help!—I would say something more, said Matilda struggling, but it would not be—Isabella—Theodore—for my sake—Oh!—she expired. Isabella and her women tore Hippolita from the corpse; but Theodore threatened destruction to all who attempted to remove him from it. He printed a thousand kisses on her clay cold hands, and uttered every expression that despairing love could dictate.

Isabella, in the mean time, was accompanying the afflicted Hippolita to her apartment; but, in the middle of the court, they were met by Manfred, who, distracted with his own thoughts, and anxious once more to behold his daughter, was advancing to the chamber where she lay. As the moon was now at its height, he read in the countenances of this unhappy company the event he dreaded. What! is she dead? cried he in wild confusion—a clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armor was heard behind. Frederic and Jerome thought the last day was at hand. The latter, forcing Theodore along with them, rushed into the court. The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down by a mighty force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins. Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso! said the vision: and having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of St. Nicholas was seen; and receiving Alfonso's shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.

The beholders fell prostrate on their faces, acknowledging the Divine will. The first that broke silence was Hippolita. My lord, said she to the desponding Manfred, behold the vanity of human greatness! Conrad is gone! Matilda is no more! in Theodore we view the true Prince of Otranto. By what miracle he is so, I know not—suffice it to us, our doom is pronounced! shall we not live, can we but dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of Heaven? Heaven ejects us—whether can we fly, but to yon holy cells that yet offer us a retreat?—Thou guiltless but unhappy woman! unhappy by my crimes! replied Manfred; my heart at last is open to thy devout admonitions. Oh! could—but it cannot be—ye are lost in wonder—let me at last do justice on myself! To heap shame on my own head is all the satisfaction I have left to offer to offended Heaven. My story has drawn down these judgments: let my confession atone—but, ah! what can atone for usurpation and a murdered child! a child murdered in a consecrated place!—List, Sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to tyrants!

Alfonso, ye all know, died in the Holy Land—ye would interrupt me; ye would say he came not fairly to his end—it is most true—why else this bitter cup which Manfred must drink to the dregs? Ricardo, my grandfather, who was chamberlain—I would draw a veil over my ancestor's crimes—but it is in vain! Alfonso died by poison. A fictitious will declared Ricardo his heir. His crimes pursued him—yet he lost no Conrad, no Matilda! I pay the price of usurpation for all. A storm overtook him. Haunted by his guilt, he vowed to St. Nicholas to found a church and two convents, if he lived to reach Otranto. The sacrifice was accepted; the saint appeared to him in a dream, and promised that Ricardo's posterity should reign in Otranto, until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle, and as long as an issue-male from Ricardo's loins should remain to enjoy it—Alas! alas! nor male nor female, except myself, remains of all his wretched race—I have done—the woes of these three days speak the rest. How this young man can be Alfonso's heir, I know not—yet I do not doubt it. His are these dominions: I resign them—yet I knew not Alfonso had an heir—I question not the will of Heaven—poverty and prayer must fill up the woeful space, until Manfred shall be summoned to Ricardo.

What remains is my part to declare, said Jerome. When Alfonso set sail for the Holy Land, he was driven by a storm to the coast of Sicily. The other vessel, which bore Ricardo and his train, as your lordship must have heard, was separated from him.—It is most true, said Manfred; and the title you give me is more than an outcast can claim—well! be it so—proceed. Jerome blushed, and continued. For three months Lord Alfonso was wind-bound in Sicily. There he became enamoured of a fair virgin, named Victoria. He was too pious to tempt her to forbidden pleasures. They were married. Yet deeming this amour incongruous to the holy vow of arms by which he was bound, he determined to conceal their nuptials, until his return from the Crusade, when he purposed to seek and acknowledge her for his lawful wife. He left her pregnant. During his absence she was delivered of a daughter; but scarce had she felt a mother's pangs, ere

she heard the fatal rumor of her lord's death, and the succession of Ricardo. What could a friendless, helpless woman do? would her testimony avail?—yet, my lord, I have an authentic writing.—It needs not, said Manfred; the horrors of these days, the vision we have but now seen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thousand parchments. Matilda's death and my expulsion.—Be composed, my lord, said Hippolita; this holy man did not mean to recall your griefs: Jerome proceeded.

I shall not dwell on what is needless. The daughter of which Victoria was delivered, was at her maturity bestowed in marriage on me. Victoria died; and the secret remained locked in my breast. Theodore's narrative has told the rest.

The friar ceased. The disconsolate company retired to the remaining part of the castle. In the morning, Manfred signed his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of Hippolita, and each took on them the habit of religion in the neighboring convents. Frederic offered his daughter to the new prince, which Hippolita's tenderness for Isabella concurred to promote. But Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent discourses with Isabella of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness, but in the society of one with whom he could ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.

END OF THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

THE OLD ENGLISH BARON.

BY CLARA REEVE.

PREFACE.

As this Story is of a species which, though not new, is out of the common track, it has been thought necessary to point out some circumstances to the Reader, which will elucidate the design, and it is hoped, will induce him to form a favorable, as well as a right judgment of the work before him.

This Story is the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel, at the same time it assumes a character and manner of its own, that differs from both; it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic Story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners. Fictitious stories have been the delight of all times and all countries, by oral tradition in barbarous, by writing in more civilized ones; and although some persons of wit and learning have condemned them indiscriminately, I would venture to affirm, that even those who so much affect to despise them under one form, will receive and embrace them under another.

Thus, for instance, a man shall admire and almost adore the epic poems of the ancients, and yet despise and execrate the ancient romances, which are only epics in prose.

History represents human nature as it is in real life:—alas, too often a melancholy retrospect!—Romance displays only the amiable side of the picture: it shows the pleasing features, and throws a veil over the blemishes. Mankind are naturally pleased with what gratifies their vanity, and vanity, like all other passions of the human heart, may be rendered subservient to good and useful purposes.

I confess that it may be abused, and become an instrument to corrupt the manners and morals of mankind; so may poetry, so may plays, so may every kind of composition: but that will prove nothing more than the old saying lately revived by the philosophers, the most in fashion, 'that every earthly thing has two handles.'

The business of Romance is, first, to excite the attention; and, secondly, to direct it to some useful, or at least innocent, end. Happy the writer who attains both these points, like Richardson! and not unfortunate, or undeserving praise, he who gains only the latter, and furnishes out an entertainment for the reader!

Having, in some degree, opened my design, I beg leave to conduct my reader back again, till he comes within view of the Castle of Otranto; a work which, as already has been observed, is an attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and modern Novel. To attain this end, there is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite the attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf.

The book we have mentioned is excellent in the two last points, but has a redundancy in the first; the opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; the diction polished and elegant; yet, with all these brilliant advantages, it falls upon the mind (though it does not upon the ear); and the reason is obvious, the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost verge of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention.

For instance; we can conceive, and allow of, the appearance of a ghost; we can even dispense with an enchanted sword and helmet: but then they must keep within certain limits of credibility. A sword so large as to require a hundred men to lift it; a helmet that by its own weight forces a passage through a court-yard, into an arched vault, big enough for a man to go through; a picture that walks out of its frame; a skeleton ghost in a hermit's cowl!—When your expectation is wound up to the highest pitch, these circumstances take it down with a witness, destroy the work of imagination, and, instead of attention, excite laughter. I was both sur-

prised and vexed to find the enchantment dissolved, which I wished might continue to the end of the book; and several of its readers have confessed the same disappointment to me. The beauties are so numerous, that we cannot bear the defects, but want it to be perfect in all respects.

In the course of my observations upon this singular book, it seemed to me that it was possible to compose a work upon the same plan, wherein these defects might be avoided; and the keeping, as in pointing, might be preserved.

But then I began to fear it might happen to me as to certain translators and imitators of Shakespeare; the unities may be preserved, while the spirit is evaporated. However, I ventured to attempt it; I read the beginning to a circle of friends of approved judgment, and by their approbation was encouraged to proceed and to finish it.

In the minority of Henry the Sixth, King of England, when the renowned John Duke of Bedford was regent of France, and Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester, was Protector of England, a worthy knight, called Sir Philip Harcey, returned from his travels to England, his native country. He had served under the glorious King Henry the Fifth with distinguished valor, had acquired an honorable fame, and was no less esteemed for Christian virtues than for deeds of chivalry. After the death of his prince, he entered into the service of the Greek emperor, and distinguished his courage against the encroachments of the Saracens. In a battle there, he took prisoner a certain gentleman, by name M. Zadisky, of Greek extraction, but brought up by a Saracen officer: this man he converted to the Christian faith; after which he bound him to himself by the ties of friendship and gratitude, and he resolved to continue with his benefactor. After thirty years' travel and warlike service, he determined to return to his native land, and to spend the remainder of his life in peace; and, by devoting himself to works of piety and charity, prepare for a better state hereafter.

This noble knight had, in his early youth, contracted a strict friendship with the only son of the Lord Lovel; a gentleman of eminent virtues and accomplishments. During Sir Philip's residence in foreign countries, he had frequently written to his friend, and had for a time received answers; the last informed him of the death of old Lord Lovel, and the marriage of the young one; but from that time he had heard no more from him. Sir Philip imputed it not to neglect or forgetfulness, but to the difficulties of intercourse, common at that time to all travellers and adventurers. When he was returning home, he resolved, after looking into his family affairs, to visit the castle of Lovel, and inquire into the situation of his friend. He landed in Kent, attended by his Greek friend, and two faithful servants, one of which was maimed by the wounds he had received in the defence of his master.

Sir Philip went to his family-seat in Yorkshire: he found his mother and sister were dead, and his estates sequestered in the hands of commissioners appointed by the Protector. He was obliged to prove the reality of his claim, and the identity of his person (by the testimony of some of the old servants of his family), after which every thing was restored to him. He took possession of his own house, established his household, settled the old servants in their former stations, and placed those he brought home in the upper offices of his family. He then left his friend to superintend his domestic affairs; and, attended by only one of his old servants, he set out for the castle of Lovel, in the west of England. They travelled by easy journeys; but, towards the evening of the second day, the servant was so ill and fatigued he could go no farther: he stopped at an inn, where he grew worse every hour, and the next day expired. Sir Philip was under great concern for the loss of his servant, and some for himself, being alone in a strange place; however, he took courage, ordered his servant's funeral, attended it himself, and having shed a tear of humanity over his grave, proceeded alone on his journey.

As he drew near the estate of his friend, he began to inquire of every one he met, whether the Lord Lovel resided at the seat of his ancestors? He was answered by one, he did not know;—by another, he could not tell; by a third, that he never heard of such a person. Sir Philip thought it strange that a man of Lord Lovel's consequence should be unknown in his own neighborhood, and where his ancestors had usually resided. He ruminated on the uncertainty of human happiness: this world, said he, has nothing for a wise man to depend on. I have lost all my relations and most of my friends, and am even uncertain whether any are remaining; I will, however, be thankful for the blessings that are spared to me; and I will endeavor to replace those that I have lost. If my friend lives, he shall share my fortune with me; his children shall have the reversion of it; and I will share his comforts in return. But perhaps my friend may have met with troubles, that have made him disgusted with the world: perhaps he has buried his amiable wife, or his promising children; and, tired of public life, he has retired into a monastery. At least, I will know what all this silence means.

When he came within a mile of the castle of Lovel, he stopped at a cottage, and asked for a draught of water: a peasant, master of the house, brought it, and asked if his honor would alight, and take a moment's refreshment. Sir Philip accepted his offer, being resolved to make farther inquiry before he approached the castle. He asked the same questions of him that he had before of others. Which Lord Lovel, said the man, does your honor inquire after?—The man whom I knew was called Arthur, said Sir Philip.—Aye, said the peasant, he was the only surviving son of Richard, Lord Lovel, as I think.—Very true, friend, he was so.—Alas, Sir, said the man, he is dead! he survived his father but a short time.—Dead! say you? how long since?—

About fifteen years, to the best of my remembrance.—Sir Philip sighed deeply.—Alas! said he, what do we, by living long, but survive all our friends! But pray tell me how he died?—I will, Sir, to the best of my knowledge. An't please your honor, I heard say, he attended the king when he went against the Welch rebels, and he left his lady big with child; and so there was a battle fought, and the king got the better of the rebels: there came first a report that some of the officers were killed; but a few days after there came a messenger with an account very different, that several were wounded, and that the Lord Lovel was slain: which said news overset us all with sorrow, for he was a noble gentleman, a bountiful master, and the delight of all the neighborhood.—He was indeed, said Sir Philip, all that is amiable and good; he was my dear and noble friend, and I am inconsolable for his loss. But the unfortunate lady, what became of her?—Why an't please your honor, they said she died of grief for the loss of her husband; but her death was kept private for a time, and we did not know it for certain till some weeks afterward.—The will of Heaven be obeyed! said Sir Philip; but who succeeded to the title and estate?—The next heir, said the peasant, a kinsman of the deceased, Sir Walter Lovel by name.—I have seen him, said Sir Philip, formerly; but where was he when these events happened?—At the castle of Lovel, Sir; he came there on a visit to the lady, and waited there to receive my lord, at his return from Wales. When the news of his death arrived, Sir Walter did every thing in his power to comfort her, and some said he was to marry her; but she refused to be comforted, and took it so to heart that she died.—And does the present Lord Lovel reside at the castle?—No, Sir.—Who then?—The Lord Baron Fitz-Owen.—And how came Sir Walter to leave the seat of his ancestors? Why, Sir, he married his sister to this said lord; and so he sold the castle to him, and went away, and built himself a house in the north country, as far as Northumberland, I think they call it.—That is very strange, said Sir Philip.—So it is, please your honor; but that is all I know about it.—I thank you, friend, for your intelligence; I have taken a long journey to see purpose, and have met with nothing but cross accidents. This life is, indeed, a pilgrimage! Pray direct me the nearest way to the next monastery.—Noble Sir, said the peasant, it is full five miles off, the night is coming on, and the ways are bad; I am but a poor man, and cannot entertain your honor as you are used to; but if you will enter my poor cottage, that, and every thing in it, are at your service.—My honest friend, I thank you heartily, said Sir Philip; your kindness and hospitality might shame many of higher birth and breeding; I will accept your kind offer; but pray let me know the name of my host?—John Wyatt, Sir; an honest man—though a poor one, and a Christian man though a sinful one.—Whose cottage is this?—It belongs to the Lord Fitz-Owen.—What family have you?—A wife, two sons, and a daughter, who will all be proud to wait upon your honor; let me hold you in honor's stirrup whilst you alight. He seconded these words by the proper action, and having assisted his guest to dismount, he conducted him into his house, called his wife to attend him, and then led his horse under a poor shed, that served him as a stable. Sir Philip was fatigued in body and mind, and was glad to repose himself any where. The courtesy of his host engaged his attention, and satisfied his wishes. He soon after returned, followed by a youth of about eighteen years.—Make haste, John, said the father, and be sure you say neither more nor less than what I have told you.—I will, father, said the lad; and immediately set off, ran like a buck across the fields, and was out of sight in an instant.—I hope, friend, said Sir Philip, you have not sent your son to provide for my entertainment; I am a soldier, used to lodge and fare hard; and if it were otherwise, your courtesy and kindness would give a relish to the most ordinary food.—I wish heartily, said Wyatt, it was in my power to entertain your honor as you ought to be; but, as I cannot do so, I will, when my son returns, acquaint you with the errand I sent him on. After this they conversed together on common subjects, like fellow-creatures of the same natural form and endowments, though different kinds of education had given a conscious superiority to the one, and a conscious inferiority to the other; and the due respect was paid by the latter, without being exacted by the former. In about half an hour young John returned.—Thou hast made haste, said the father.—Not more than good speed, quoth the son.—Tell us, then, how you sped?—Shall I tell all that passed? said John.—All, said the father; I don't want to hide any tale.—John stood with his cap in his hand, and thus told his tale:—I went straight to the castle as fast as I could run; it was my hap to light on young master Edmund first, so I told him just as you bade me, that a noble gentleman was come a long journey from foreign parts to see the Lord Lovel, his friend; and having lived abroad many years, he did not know that he was dead, and that the castle was fallen into other hands; that upon hearing these tidings he was much grieved and disappointed, and wanting a night's lodging to rest himself before he returned to his own home, he was fain to take up with one at our cottage; that my father thought my lord would be angry with him, if he were not told of the stranger's journey and intentions, especially to let such a man lie at our cottage, where he could neither be lodged nor entertained according to his quality. Here John stopped, and his father exclaimed.—A good lad! you did your errand very well; and tell us the answer. John proceeded.—Master Edmund ordered me some beer, and went to acquaint my lord of the message: he staid a while, and then came back to me.—John, said he, tell the noble stranger, that the Baron Fitz-Owen greets him well, and desires him to rest assured, that though Lord Lovel is dead, and the castle fallen into other hands, his friends will always find a welcome there; and my lord desires that he will accept of a lodging

there, while he remains in this country.—So I came away directly, and made haste to deliver my errand.

Sir Philip expressed some dissatisfaction at this mark of old Wyatt's respect. I wish, said he, that you had acquainted me with your intention before you sent to inform the baron I was here. I choose rather to lodge with you; and I propose to make amends for the trouble I shall give you.—Pray, Sir, don't mention it, said the peasant, you are as welcome as myself; I hope no offence; the only reason of my sending was, because I am both unable and unworthy to entertain your honor.—I am sorry, said Sir Philip, you should think me so dainty; I am a Christian soldier; and Him I acknowledge for my prince and master, accepted the invitations of the poor, and washed the feet of his disciples. Let us say no more on this head; I am resolved to stay this night in your cottage, to-morrow I will wait on the baron, and thank him for his hospitable invitation.—That shall be as your honor pleases, since you will condescend to stay here. John, do you run back and acquaint my lord of it.—Not so, said Sir Philip; it is now almost dark.—'Tis no matter, said John, I can go it blindfold.—Sir Philip then gave him a message to the baron in his own name, acquainting him that he would pay his respects to him in the morning. John flew back the second time, and soon returned with new commendations from the baron, and that he would expect him on the morrow. Sir Philip gave him an angel of gold, and praised his speed and abilities.

He supped with Wyatt and his family upon new-laid eggs and rashers of bacon, with the highest relish. They praised the Creator for his gifts, and acknowledged they were unworthy of the least of his blessings. They gave the best of their two loaves up to Sir Philip, the rest of the family slept in the other, the old woman and daughter in the bed, the father and his two sons upon clean straw. Sir Philip's bed was of a better kind, and yet much inferior to his usual accommodations; nevertheless, the good knight slept as well in Wyatt's cottage, as he could have done in a palace.

During his sleep, many strange and incoherent dreams arose to his imagination. He thought he received a message from his friend Lord Lovel, to come to him at the castle; that he stood at the gate, and received him; that he strove to embrace him, but could not; but that he spoke to this effect:—'Though I have been dead these fifteen years, I still command here, and none can enter these gates, without my permission; know that it is I that invite, and bid you welcome; the hopes of my house rest upon you.—Upon this he bid Sir Philip follow him; he led him through many rooms, till at last he sunk down, and Sir Philip thought he still followed him, till he came into a dark and frightful cave, where he disappeared, and in his stead he beheld a complete suit of armor stained with blood, which belonged to his friend, and he thought he heard dismal groans from beneath. Presently after, he thought he was hurried away by an invisible hand, and led into a wild heath, where the people were enclosing the ground, and making preparations for two combatants; the trumpet sounded, and a voice called out still louder.—'Forbear! It is not permitted to be revealed till the time is ripe for the event; wait with patience on the decrees of Heaven. He was then transported to his own house, where, going into an unfrequented room, he was again met by his friend, who was living, and in all the bloom of youth, as when he first knew him; he started at the sight, and awoke. The sun shone upon his curtains, and perceiving it was day, he sat up, and recollected where he was. The images that impressed his sleeping fancy remained strongly on his mind waking; but his reason strove to disperse them; it was natural that the story he had heard should create these ideas, that they should wait on him in his sleep, and that every dream should bear some relation to his deceased friend. The sun dazzled his eyes, the birds serenaded him, and diverted his attention, and a woodbine forced its way through the window, and regaled his sense of smelling with its fragrance. He arose, paid his devotions to Heaven, and then carefully descended the narrow stairs, and went out at the door of the cottage. There he saw the industrious wife and daughter of old Wyatt at their morning work, the one milking her cow, the other feeding her poultry. He asked for a draught of milk, which, with a slice of rye bread, served to break his fast. He walked about the fields alone; for old Wyatt and his two sons were gone out to their daily labor. He was soon called back by the good woman, who told him that a servant from the baron wanted to conduct him to the castle. He took leave of Wyatt's wife, telling her he would see her again before he left the country. The daughter fetched his horse, which he mounted, and set forward with the servant, of whom he asked many questions concerning his master's family.—How long have you lived with the baron?—Ten years.—Is he a good master?—Yes, Sir, and also a good husband and father.—What family has he?—Three sons and a daughter.—What age are they?—The eldest son is in his seventeenth year, the second in his sixteenth, and the others several years younger; but besides these, my lord has several young gentlemen brought up with his own sons, two of which are his nephews; he keeps in his house a learned clerk, to teach them languages; and as for all bodily exercises, none come near them; there is a fletcher to teach them the use of the cross-bow; a master to teach them to ride; another the use of the sword, another learns them to dance; and then they wrestle and run, and have such activity in all their motions, that it does one good to see them; and my lord thinks nothing too much to bestow on their education.—Truly, says Sir Philip, he does the part of a good parent, and I honor him greatly for it; but are the young gentlemen of a promising disposition?—Yes, indeed, Sir, answered the servant, the young gentlemen, my lord's sons, are hopeful youths; but yet there is one who is thought to exceed them all, though he is the son of a poor laborer.—And who is he?

said the knight.—One Edmund Twyford, the son of a cottager in our village; he is to be sure as fine a youth as ever the sun shone upon, and of so sweet a disposition, that nobody envies his good fortune.—What good fortune does he enjoy?—Why, Sir, about two years ago, my lord, at his sons' request, took him into his own family, and gives him the same education as his own children; the young lords doat upon him, especially Master William, who is about his own age; it is supposed that he will attend the young lords when they go to the wars, which my lord intends they shall by and by.—What you tell me, said Sir Philip, increases every minute my respect for your lord; he is an excellent father and master; he seeks out merit in obscurity; he distinguishes and rewards it: I honor him with all my heart.

In this manner they conversed together till they came within view of the castle. In a field near the house they saw a company of youths, with cross-bows in their hands, shooting at a mark. There, said the servant, are our young gentlemen at their exercises. Sir Philip stopped his horse to observe them; he heard two or three of them cry out.—Edmund is the victor! He wins the prize! I must, said Sir Philip, take a view of this Edmund.—He jumped off his horse, gave the bridle to the servant, and walked into the field. The young gentlemen came up, and paid their respects to him; he apologized for intruding upon their sports, and asked which was the victor? Upon which, the youth he spoke to beckoned to another, who immediately advanced, and made his obeisance; as he drew near, Sir Philip fixed his eyes upon him with so much attention, that he seemed not to observe his courtesy and address. At length he recollected himself, and said.—What is your name, young man?—Edmund Twyford, replied the youth; and I have the honor to attend upon the Lord Fitz-Owen's sons.—Pray, noble Sir, said the youth who first addressed Sir Philip, are not you the stranger who is expected by my father?—I am, Sir, answered he, and I go to pay my respects to him.—Will you excuse our attendance, Sir? we have not yet finished our exercises.—My dear youth, said Sir Philip, no apology is necessary; but will you favor me with your proper name, that I may know to whose courtesy I am obliged?—My name is William Fitz-Owen; that gentleman is my eldest brother, Master Robert; that other my kinsman, master Richard Wenlock. Very well, I thank you, gentle Sir; I beg you not to stir another step, your servant holds my horse.—Farewell, Sir, said Master William, I hope we shall have the pleasure of meeting you at dinner. The youths returned to their sports, and Sir Philip mounted his horse and proceeded to the castle; he entered it with a deep sigh and melancholy recollections. The baron received him with the utmost respect and courtesy. He gave a brief account of the principal events that had happened in the family of Lovel during his absence; he spoke of the late Lord Lovel with respect, of the present with the affection of a brother. Sir Philip, in return, gave a brief recital of his own adventures abroad, and of the disagreeable circumstances he had met with since his return home; he pathetically lamented the loss of all his friends, not forgetting that of his faithful servant on the way: saying he could be contented to give up the world, and retire to a religious house, but that he was withheld by the consideration, that some who depended entirely upon him, would want his presence and assistance; and, beside that, he thought he might be of service to many others. The baron agreed with him in opinion, that a man was of much more service to the world who continued in it, than one who retired from it, and gave his fortune to the church, whose servants did not always make the best use of it. Sir Philip then turned the conversation, and congratulated the baron on his hopeful family; he praised their persons and address, and warmly applauded the care he bestowed on their education. The baron listened with pleasure to the honest approbation of a worthy heart, and enjoyed the true happiness of a parent.

Sir Philip then made further inquiry concerning Edmund, whose appearance had struck him with an impression in his favor. That boy, said the baron, is the son of a cottager in this neighborhood; his uncommon merit, and gentleness of manners distinguish him from those of his own class; from his childhood he attracted the notice and affection of all that knew him; he was beloved every where but at his father's house, and there it should seem that his merits were his crimes; for the peasant, his father, hated him, treated him severely, and at length threatened to turn him out of doors; he used to run here and there on errands for my people, and at length they obliged me to take notice of him; my sons earnestly desired I would take him into my family; I did so about two years ago, intending to make him their servant; but his extraordinary genius and disposition have obliged me to look upon him in a superior light: perhaps I may incur the censure of many people, by giving him so many advantages, and treating him as the companion of my children; his merit must justify or condemn my partiality for him; however, I trust that I have secured to my children a faithful servant of the upper kind, and a useful friend to my family. Sir Philip warmly applauded his generous host, and wished to be a sharer in his bounty to that fine youth, whose appearance indicated all the qualities that had endeared him to his companions.

At the hour of dinner the young men presented themselves before their lord and his guest. Sir Philip addressed himself to Edmund; he asked him many questions, and received modest and intelligent answers, and he grew every minute more pleased with him. After dinner the youths withdrew with their tutor to pursue their studies. Sir Philip sat for some time, wrapt up in meditation. After some minutes, the baron asked him, if he might not be favored with the fruits of his contemplation?—You shall, my lord, answered he, for you have a right to them. I was thinking, that when many blessings are lost, we should cherish those that remain, and

even endeavor to replace the others. My lord, I have taken a strong liking to that youth whom you call Edmund Twyford; I have neither children nor relations to claim my fortune, nor share my affections; your lordship has many demands upon your generosity; I can provide for this promising youth without doing injustice to any one: will you give him to me?—He is a fortunate boy, said the baron, to gain your favor so soon.—My lord, said the knight, I will confess to you, that the first thing that touched my heart in his favor, is a strong resemblance he bears to a certain dear friend I once had, and his manner resembles him as much as his person; his qualities deserve that he should be placed in a higher rank; I will adopt him for my son, and introduce him into the world as my relation, if you will resign him to me: what say you?—Sir, said the baron, you have made a noble offer, and I am too much the young man's friend to be a hindrance to his preferment. It is true, that I intended to provide for him in my own family; but I cannot do so so effectually as by giving him to you, whose generous affection being unlimited by other ties, may in time prefer him to a higher station, as he shall deserve it. I have only one condition to make, that the lad shall have his opinion; for I would not oblige him to leave my service against his inclination.—You say well, replied Sir Philip; nor would I take him upon other terms.—Agreed then, said the baron: let us send for Edmund hither. A servant was sent to fetch him; he came immediately, and his lord thus bespoke him: Edmund, you owe eternal obligations to this gentleman, who, perceiving in you a certain resemblance to a friend of his, and liking your behavior, has taken a great affection for you, inasmuch that he desires to receive you into his family: I cannot better provide for you than by disposing of you to him; and, if you have no objection, you shall return home with him when he goes from hence. The countenance of Edmund underwent many alterations during this proposal of his lord; it expressed tenderness, gratitude, and sorrow, but the last was predominant; he bowed respectfully to the baron and Sir Philip, and, after some hesitation, spoke as follows:—I feel very strongly the obligations I owe to this gentleman, for his noble and generous offer: I cannot repress the sense I have of his goodness to me, a peasant boy, only known to him by my lord's kind and partial mention: this uncommon bounty claims my eternal gratitude. To you, my honored lord, I owe every thing, even this gentleman's good opinion; you distinguished me when nobody else did; and, next to you, your sons are my best and dearest benefactors; they introduced me to your notice. My heart is unalterably attached to this house and family, and my utmost ambition is to spend my life in your service. But if you have perceived any great and grievous faults in me, that make you wish to put me out of your family, and if you have recommended me to this gentleman in order to be rid of me, in that case I will submit to your pleasure, as I would if you should sentence me to death.

During this speech, the tears made themselves channels down Edmund's cheeks; and his two noble auditors, catching the tender infection, wiped their eyes at the conclusion.—My dear child, said the baron, you overcome me by your tenderness and gratitude: I know of no faults you have committed, that I should wish to be rid of you; I thought to do you the best service by promoting you to that of Sir Philip Harclay, who is both able and willing to provide for you; but if you prefer my service to his, I will not part with you. Upon this Edmund knelt to the baron; he embraced his knees.—My dear lord! I am and will be your servant, in preference to any man living; I only ask your permission to live and die in your service.—You see, Sir Philip, said the baron, how this boy engages the heart: how can I part with him?—I cannot ask you any more, answered Sir Philip; I see it is impossible; but I esteem you both still higher than I was; the youth for his gratitude, and your lordship for your noble mind and true generosity; blessings attend you both!—Oh! Sir, said Edmund, pressing the hand of Sir Philip, do not think me ungrateful to you; I will ever remember your goodness, and pray to Heaven to reward it; the name of Sir Philip Harclay shall be engraven upon my heart, next to my lord and his family, for ever.—Sir Philip raised the youth and embraced him, saying,—If ever you protect a friend, remember me; and depend upon my protection, so long as you continue to deserve it. Edmund bowed low, and withdrew, with his eyes full of tears of sensibility and gratitude. When he was gone, Sir Philip said, I am thinking, that though young Edmund wants not my assistance at present, he may hereafter stand in need of my friendship. I should not wonder if such rare qualities as he possesses should one day create envy, and raise him enemies; in which case he might come to lose your favor, without any fault of yours or his own.—I am obliged to you for the warning, said the baron; I hope it will be unnecessary; but if ever I part with Edmund, you shall have the refusal of him.—I thank your lordship for all your civilities to me, said the knight; I leave my best wishes with you and your hopeful family, and I humbly take my leave.—Will you not stay one night in the castle? returned my lord; you shall be as welcome a guest as ever.—I acknowledge your goodness and hospitality, but this house fills me with melancholy recollections; I came hither with a heavy heart, and it will not be lighter while I remain here. I shall always remember your lordship with the highest respect and esteem; and I pray God to preserve you, and increase your blessings.

After some farther ceremonies, Sir Philip departed, and returned to old Wyatt's, ruminating on the vicissitude of human affairs, and thinking on the changes he had seen.

At his return to Wyatt's cottage, he found the family assembled together. He told them he would take another night's lodging there, which they heard with great pleasure; for he had familiarized himself to them in the last evening's conversation, inasmuch that they began to enjoy his company. He

told Wyatt of the misfortune he had sustained by losing his servant on the way, and wished he could get one to attend him home in his place. Young John looked earnestly at his father, who returned a look of approbation. I perceive one in this company, said he, that would be proud to serve your honor; but I fear he is not brought up well enough. John colored with impatience; he could not forbear speaking.—Sir, I can answer for an honest heart, a willing mind, and a light pair of heels; and though I am somewhat awkward, I shall be proud to learn to please my noble master, if he will but try me.—You say well, said Sir Philip; I have observed your qualifications, and if you are desirous to serve me, I am equally pleased with you; if your father has no objection I will take you.—Objection, Sir! said the old man; it will be my pride to prefer him to such a noble gentleman; I will make no terms for him, but leave . . . to your honor to do for him as he shall deserve.—Very well, said Sir Philip, you shall be no loser by that; I will charge myself with the care of the young man. The bargain was struck, and Sir Philip purchased a horse for John of the old man. The next morning they set out; the knight left marks of his bounty with the good people, and departed, laden with their blessings and prayers. He stopped at the place where his faithful servant was buried, and caused masses to be said for the repose of his soul; then, pursuing his way by easy journeys, arrived in safety at home. His family rejoiced at his return: he settled his new servant in attendance upon his person; he then looked round his neighborhood for objects of his charity: when he saw merit in distress, it was his delight to raise and support it; he spent his time in the service of his Creator, and glorified him in doing good to his creatures. He reflected frequently upon every thing that had befallen him in his late journey to the west, and, at his leisure, took down all the particulars in writing.

Here follows an interval of four years, as by the manuscript; and this omission seems intended by the Writer. What follows is in a different hand, and the character is more modern.

About this time the prognostics of Sir Philip Harclay began to be verified, that Edmund's good qualities might one day excite envy and create him enemies. The sons and kinsmen of his patron began to seek occasion to find fault with him, and to depreciate him with others. The baron's eldest son and heir, Master Robert, had several contests with Master William, the second son, upon his account; this youth had a warm affection for Edmund, and whenever his brother and kinsmen treated him slightly, he supported him against their malicious insinuations. Mr. Richard Wenlock, and Mr. John Markham, were the sisters' sons of the Lord Fitz-Owen; and there were several other more distant relations, who, with them, secretly envied Edmund's fine qualities, and strove to lessen him in the esteem of the baron and his family. By degrees they excited a dislike in Master Robert, that in time was fixed into habit, and fell little short of aversion.

Young Wenlock's hatred was confirmed by an additional circumstance; he had a growing passion for the Lady Emma, the baron's only daughter; and, as love is eagle-eyed, he saw, or fancied he saw, her cast an eye of preference on Edmund. An accidental service that she received from him had excited her grateful regards and attentions towards him. The incessant view of his fine person and qualities, had perhaps improved her esteem into a still softer sensation, though she was yet ignorant of it, and thought it only the tribute due to gratitude and friendship.

One Christmas time, the baron and all his family went to visit a family in Wales; crossing a ford, the horse that carried the Lady Emma, who rode behind her cousin Wenlock, stumbled, and fell down, and threw her off into the water; Edmund dismounted in a moment, and flew to her assistance; he took her out so quick, that the accident was not known to some part of the company. From this time Wenlock strove to undermine Edmund in her esteem, and she conceived herself obliged, in justice and gratitude, to defend him against the malicious insinuations of his enemies. She one day asked Wenlock, why he in particular should endeavor to recommend himself to her favor, by speaking against Edmund, to whom she was under great obligations? He made but little reply; but the impression sunk deep into his rancorous heart; every word in Edmund's behalf was like a poisoned arrow, that rankled in the wound, and grew every day more inflamed. Sometimes he would pretend to extenuate Edmund's supposed faults, in order to load him with the sin of ingratitude upon other occasions. Rancor works deepest in the heart that strives to conceal it; and, when covered by art, frequently puts on the appearance of candor. By these means did Wenlock and Markham impose upon the credulity of Master Robert and their other relations: Master William only stood proof against all their insinuations.

The same autumn that Edmund completed his eighteenth year, the baron declared his intention of sending the young men of his house to France the following spring, to learn the art of war, and signalize their courage and abilities.

Their ill-will towards Edmund was so well concealed, that his patron had not discovered it; but it was whispered among the servants, who are generally close observers of the manners of their principals. Edmund was a favorite with them all, which was a strong presumption that he deserved to be so, for they seldom show much regard to dependants, or to superior domestics, who are generally objects of envy and dislike. Edmund was courteous, but not familiar with them; and by this means, gained their affections, without soliciting them. Among whom was an old serving man, called Joseph Howell: this man had formerly served the old Lord Lovel, and his son; and when the young lord died, and Sir Walter sold the castle to his brother-in-law, the Lord Fitz-Owen, he

only of all the old servants was left in the house, to take care of it, and to deliver it into the possession of the new proprietor, who retained him in his service: he was a man of few words, but much reflection; and, without troubling himself about other people's affairs, went silently and properly about his own business; more solicitous to discharge his duty, than to recommend himself to notice, and not seeming to aspire to any higher office than that of a serving man. This old man would fix his eyes upon Edmund, whenever he could do it without observation; sometimes he would sigh deeply, and a tear would start from his eye, which he strove to conceal from observation. One day Edmund surprised him in his tender emotion, as he was wiping his eyes with the back of his hand:—Why, said he, my good friend, do you look at me so earnestly and affectionately?—Because I love you, Master Edmund, said he; because I wish you well.—I thank you kindly, answered Edmund; I am unable to repay your love, otherwise than by returning it, which I do sincerely.—I thank you, Sir, said the old man; that is all I desire, and more than I deserve.—Do not say so, said Edmund; if I had any better way to thank you, I would not say so much about it; but words were all my inheritance. Upon this he shook hands with Joseph, who withdrew hastily to conceal his emotion, saying, God bless you, master, and make your fortune equal to your deserts! I cannot help thinking you were born to a higher station than what you now hold.—You know me to the contrary, said Edmund;—but Joseph was out of sight and hearing.

The notice and observation of strangers, and the affection of individuals, together with that inward consciousness that always attends superior qualities, would sometimes kindle the flames of ambition in Edmund's heart; but he checked them presently, by reflecting upon his low birth and dependant station. He was modest, yet intrepid; gentle and courteous to all, frank and unreserved to those that loved him; discreet and complaisant to those who hated him; generous and compassionate to the distresses of his fellow-creatures in general; humble, but not servile, to his patron and superiors. Once, when he with a manly spirit justified himself against a malicious imputation, his young lord Robert taxed him with pride and arrogance to his kinsmen. Edmund denied the charge against him with equal spirit and modesty. Master Robert answered him sharply:—how dare you contradict my cousins? do you mean to give them the lie?—Not in words, Sir, said Edmund; but I will behave so as that you shall not believe them. Master Robert haughtily bid him be silent, and know himself, and not presume to contend with men so much his superiors in every respect. These heart-burnings, in some degree, subsided by their preparations for going to France. Master Robert was to be presented at court before his departure, and it was expected that he should be knighted. The baron designed Edmund to be his esquire; but this was frustrated by his old enemies, who persuaded Robert to make choice of one of his own domestics, called Thomas Hewson; him did they set up as a rival to Edmund, and he took every occasion to affront him. All that Master Robert gained by this step was the contempt of those who saw Edmund's merit, and thought it want of discernment in him not to distinguish and reward it. Edmund requested of his lord that he might be Master William's attendant; and when, said he, my patron shall be knighted, as I make no doubt he will one day be, he has promised that I shall be his esquire. The baron granted Edmund's request; and, being freed from servitude to the rest, he was devoted to that of his beloved master, William; who treated him in public as his principal domestic, but in private as his chosen friend and brother.

The whole cabal of his enemies consulted together in what manner they should vent their resentment against him; and it was agreed that they should treat him with indifference and neglect till they should arrive in France: and when there, they should contrive to render his courage suspected, and, by putting him upon some desperate enterprise, rid themselves of him for ever. About this time died the great Duke of Bedford, the irreparable loss of the English nation. He was succeeded by Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, as Regent of France, of which great part had revolted to Charles the Dauphin. Frequent actions ensued. Cities were lost and won; and continual occasion offered to exercise the courage and abilities of the youths of both nations.

The young men of Baron Fitz-Owen's house were recommended particularly to the regent's notice. Master Robert was knighted, with several other young men of family, who distinguished themselves by their spirit and activity upon every occasion. The youth were daily employed in warlike exercises and frequent actions; and made the first essay in arms in such a manner as to bring into notice all that deserved it.

Various arts were used by Edmund's enemies to expose him to danger; but all their contrivances recoiled upon themselves, and brought increase of honor upon Edmund's head; he distinguished himself upon so many occasions, that Sir Robert himself began to pay him more than ordinary regard, to the infinite mortification of his kinsmen and relations. They laid many schemes against him, but none took effect.

From this place the characters in the manuscript are effaced by time and damp. Here and there some sentences are legible, but not sufficient to pursue the thread of the story. Mention is made of several actions in which the young men were engaged—that Edmund distinguished himself by intrepidity in action; by gentleness, humanity, and modesty in the cessations—that he attracted the notice of every person of observation, and also, that he received personal commendations from the regent.

The following incidents are clear enough to be transcribed; but the beginning of the next succeeding pages is obliterated; however, we may guess at the beginning of what remains.

As soon as the cabal met in Sir Robert's tent, Mr. Wenlock thus began:—You see, my friends, that every attempt we make to humble this upstart turns into applause, and serves only to raise his pride still higher. Something must be done, or his praise will go home before us, at our own expense; and we shall seem only fools to set off his glories. Any thing would I give to the man who should execute our vengeance upon him.—Stop there, cousin Wenlock, said Sir Robert; though I think Edmund proud and vain-glorious, and would join in any scheme to humble him, and make him know himself, I will not suffer any man to use such base methods to effect it. Edmund is brave; and it is beneath an Englishman to revenge himself by unworthy means; if any such are used, I will be the first man to bring the guilty to justice; and if I hear another word to this purpose, I will inform my brother William, who will acquaint Edmund with your mean intentions. Upon this the cabal drew back, and Mr. Wenlock protested that he meant no more than to mortify his pride, and make him know his proper station. Soon after Sir Robert withdrew, and they resumed their deliberations.

Then spoke Thomas Hewson: There is a party to be sent out to-morrow night, to intercept a convoy of provisions for the relief of Rouen: I will provoke Mr. Edmund to make one of this party, and when he is engaged in the action, I and my companions will draw off, and leave him to the enemy, who, I trust, will so handle him, that you shall no more be troubled with him.—This will do, said Mr. Wenlock; but let it be kept from my two cousins, and only known to ourselves; if they offer to be of the party, I will persuade them off it: and you, Thomas, if you bring the scheme to a conclusion, may depend upon my eternal gratitude.—And mine, said Markham; and so said all. The next day the affair was publicly mentioned; and Hewson, as he promised, provoked Edmund to the trial: several young men of family offered themselves: among the rest, Sir Robert and his brother William. Mr. Wenlock persuaded them not to go, and set the danger of the enterprise in the strongest colors. At last Sir Robert complained of the tooth-ache, and was confined to his tent; Edmund waited on him; and judging by the ardor of his own courage of that of his patron, thus bespoke him:—I am greatly concerned, dear Sir, that we cannot have your company at night; but as I know that you will suffer at being absent, I would beg the favor of you to let me use your arms and device, and I will promise not to disgrace them.—No, Edmund, I cannot consent to that; I thank you for your noble offer, and will remember it to your advantage; but I cannot wear honors of another man's getting. You have awakened me to a sense of my duty: I will go with you, and contend with you for glory; and William shall do the same.

In a few hours they were ready to set out. Wenlock and Markham, and their dependants, found themselves engaged in honor to go upon an enterprise they never intended; and set out, with heavy hearts, to join the party. They marched in silence in the horrors of a dark night, and wet roads; they met the convoy where they expected, and a sharp engagement ensued. The victory was some time doubtful; but the moon rising on the backs of the English, gave them the advantage. They saw the disposition of their enemies, and availed themselves of it. Edmund advanced the foremost of the party; he drew out the leader on the French side; he slew him. Mr. William pressed forward to assist his friend; Sir Robert, to defend his brother; Wenlock and Markham, from shame to stay behind.

Thomas Hewson and his associates drew back on their side; the French perceived it, and pursued the advantage. Edmund pushed them in front; the young nobles all followed him; they broke through the detachment, and stopped the wagons. The officer who commanded the party, encouraged them to go on; the defeat was soon complete, and the provisions carried in triumph to the English camp.

Edmund was presented to the regent, as the man to whom the victory was chiefly owing. Not a tongue presumed to move itself against him; even malice and envy were silenced. Approach, young man, said the regent, that I may confer upon you the honor of knighthood, which you have well deserved. Mr. Wenlock could no longer forbear speaking; Knighthood, said he, is an order belonging to gentlemen, it cannot be conferred on a peasant.—What say you, Sir? returned the regent; is this youth a peasant?—He is, said Wenlock, let him deny it if he can.—Edmund, with a modest bow, replied,—It is true, indeed, I am a peasant, and this honor is too great for me: I have only done my duty.—The Duke of York, whose pride of birth equalled that of any man, living or dead, sheathed his sword immediately.—Though, said he, I cannot reward you as I intended, I will take care that you shall have a large share in the spoils of this night; and, I declare publicly, that you stand first in the list of gallant men in this engagement.

Thomas Hewson and his associates made a poor figure on their return; they were publicly reproved for their backwardness. Hewson was wounded in body, and more in mind, for the bad success of his ill-laid design. He could not hold up his head before Edmund; who, unconscious of their malice, administered every kind of comfort to them. He spoke in their behalf to the commanding officer, imputing their conduct to unavoidable accidents. He visited them privately; he gave them a part of the spoils allotted to himself: by every act of valor and courtesy he strove to engage those hearts that hated, envied, and maligned him: but where hatred arises from envy of superior qualities, every display of those qualities increases the cause from whence it arises.

Another passage ensues here.

The young nobles and gentlemen, who distinguished Edmund, were prevented from raising him to preferment by the

insinuations of Wenlock and his associates, who never failed to set before him his low descent, and his pride and arrogance in presuming to rank with gentlemen.

Here the manuscript is not legible for several pages. There is mention, about this time, of the death of the Lady Fitz-Owen; but not the cause.

Wenlock rejoiced to find that his schemes took effect, and that they should be recalled at the approach of winter. The baron was glad of a pretence to send for them home; for he could no longer endure the absence of his children after the loss of their mother.

The manuscript is again defaced for many leaves; at length the letters become more legible, and the remainder of it is quite perfect.

From the time the young men returned from France, the enemies of Edmund employed their utmost abilities to ruin him in the baron's opinion, and get him dismissed from the family. They insinuated a thousand things against him, that happened, as they said, during his residence in France, and therefore could not be known to his master: but, when the baron privately inquired of his two elder sons, he found there was no truth in their reports. Sir Robert, though he did not love him, scorned to join in untruths against him. Mr. William spoke of him with the warmth of fraternal affection. The baron perceived that his kinsmen disliked Edmund; but his own good heart hindered him from seeing the baseness of theirs. It is said, that continual dropping will wear away a stone; so did their incessant reports, by insensible degrees, produce a coolness in his patron's behavior towards him. If he behaved with manly spirit, it was misconstrued into pride and arrogance; his generosity was imprudence; his humility was hypocrisy, the better to cover his ambition. Edmund bore patiently all the indignities that were thrown upon him; and though he felt them severely in his bosom, scorned to justify his conduct at the expense even of his enemies. Perhaps his gentle spirit might at length have sunk under this treatment, but Providence interposed in his behalf; and, by seemingly accidental circumstances, conducted him imperceptibly towards the crisis of his fate.

Father Oswald, who had been preceptor to the young men, had a strong affection for Edmund, from a thorough knowledge of his heart; he saw through the mean artifices that were used to undermine him in his patron's favor; he watched their machinations, and strove to frustrate their designs.

The good man used frequently to walk out with Edmund; they conversed upon various subjects; and the youth would lament to him the unhappiness of his situation, and the peculiar circumstances that attended him. The father, by his wholesome advice, comforted his drooping heart; and confirmed him in his resolution of bearing unavoidable evils with patience and fortitude, from the consciousness of his own innocence, and the assurance of a future and eternal reward.

One day, as they were walking in a wood near the castle, Edmund asked the father, what meant those preparations for building, the cutting down trees, and burning of bricks?—What, said Oswald, have you not heard that my lord is going to build a new apartment on the west side of the castle?—And why, said Edmund, should my lord be at that expense, when there is one on the east side that is never occupied?—That apartment, said the friar, you must have observed, is always shut up.—I have observed it often, said Edmund, but I never presumed to ask any questions about it.—You had then, said Oswald, less curiosity, and more discretion, than is common at your age.—You have raised my curiosity, said Edmund; and, if it be not improper, I beg of you to gratify it.—We are alone, said Oswald, and I am so well assured of your prudence, that I will explain this mystery in some degree to you.

You must know, that apartment was occupied by the last Lord Lovel, when he was a bachelor. He married in his father's life-time, who gave up his own apartment to him, and offered to retire to this himself; but the son would not permit him; he chose to sleep here rather than in any other. He had been married about three months, when his father, the old lord, died of a fever. About twelve months after his marriage, he was called upon to attend the king, Henry the Fourth, on an expedition in Wales, whither he was attended by many of his dependants. He left his lady big with child, and full of care and anxiety for his safety and return.

After the king had chastised the rebels, and obtained the victory, the Lord Lovel was expected home every day; various reports were sent home before him; one messenger brought an account of his health and safety; soon after another came with bad news, that he was slain in battle. His kinsman, Sir Walter Lovel, came here on a visit to comfort the lady; and he waited to receive his kinsman on his return. It was he that brought the news of the sad event of the battle to the Lady Lovel.

She fainted away at the relation; but when she revived, exerted the utmost resolution; saying it was her duty to bear this dreadful stroke with Christian fortitude and patience, especially in regard to the child she went with, the last remains of her beloved husband, and the undoubted heir of a noble house. For several days she seemed an example of patience and resignation; but then, all at once, she renounced them, and broke out into passionate and frantic exclamations; she said that her dear lord was basely murdered; that his ghost had appeared to her, and revealed his fate: she called upon heaven and earth to revenge her wrongs; saying, she would never cease complaining to God, and the king, for vengeance and justice.

Upon this Sir Walter told the servants, that Lady Lovel was distracted, from grief, for the death of her lord; that his regard for her was as strong as ever; and that if she recovered, he would himself be her comforter, and marry her. In

the mean time she was confined in this very apartment, and in less than a month the poor lady died. She lies buried in the family vault in St. Austin's church in the village. Sir Walter took possession of the castle, and all the other estates, and assumed the title of Lord Lovel.

Soon after, it was reported that the castle was haunted, and that the ghosts of Lord and Lady Lovel had been seen by several of the servants. Whoever went into this apartment were terrified by uncommon noises and strange appearances; at length this apartment was wholly shut up, and the servants were forbid to enter it, or to talk of any thing relating to it; however, the story did not stop here; it was whispered about, that the new Lord Lovel was so disturbed every night, that he could not sleep in quiet; and, at last being tired of the place, he sold the castle and the estate of his ancestors, to his brother-in-law, the Lord Fitz-Owen, who now enjoys it, and has left this country.

All this is news to me, said Edmund; but, father, tell me what grounds there were for the lady's suspicion that her lord died unfairly?—Alas! said Oswald, that is only known to God. There were strange thoughts in the minds of many at that time; I had mine; but I will not disclose them, even to you. I will not injure those who may be innocent; and I leave it to Providence, who will, doubtless, in its own best time and manner, punish the guilty. But let what I have told you be as if you had never heard it.

I thank you for these marks of your esteem and confidence, said Edmund: be assured that I will not abuse them, nor do I desire to pry into secrets not proper to be revealed: I entirely approve your discretion, and acquiesce in your conclusion, that Providence will in its own time vindicate its ways to man: if it were not for that trust, my situation would be insupportable. I strive earnestly to deserve the esteem and favor of good men; I endeavor to regulate my conduct so as to avoid giving offence to any man; but I see, with infinite pain, that it is impossible for me to gain these points.—I see it too, with great concern, said Oswald; and every thing that I can say or do in your favor, is misconstrued: and, by seeking to do you service, I lose my own influence: but I will never give my sanction to acts of injustice, nor join to oppress innocence. My dear child, put your trust in God; he who brought light out of darkness, can bring good out of evil.—I hope and trust so, said Edmund; but, father, if my enemies should prevail, if my lord should believe their stories against me, and I should be put out of the house with disgrace, what will become of me? I have nothing but my character to depend upon: if I lose that, I lose every thing; and I see they seek no less than my ruin.—Trust in my lord's honor and justice, replied Oswald: he knows your virtue, and he is not ignorant of their ill-will towards you.—I know my lord's justice too well to doubt it, said Edmund; but would it not be better to rid him of this trouble, and his family of an incumbrance? I would gladly do something for myself, but cannot without my lord's recommendation; and, such is my situation, that I fear the asking for a dissolution would be accounted base ingratitude: beside, when I think of leaving this house, my heart saddens at the thought, and tells me I cannot be happy out of it: yet, I think I could return to a peasant's life with cheerfulness, rather than live in a palace under disdain and contempt.—Have patience a little longer, my son, said Oswald; I will think of some way to serve you, and to represent your grievances to my lord, without offence to either: perhaps the causes may be removed. Continue to observe the same irreproachable conduct; and be assured, that Heaven will defend your innocence, and defeat the unjust designs of your enemies. Let us now return home.

About a week after this conference, Edmund walked out in the fields, ruminating on the disagreeable circumstances of his situation. Insuperable of the time, he had been out several hours, without perceiving how the day wore away, when he heard himself called by name several times; looking backward, he saw his friend Mr. William, and hallooed to him. He came running towards him; and, leaping over the stile, stood still awhile to recover his breath.—What is the matter, Sir? said Edmund: your looks bespeak some tidings of importance. With a look of tender concern and affection, the youth pressed his hands and spoke:—My dear Edmund, you must come home with me directly: your old enemies have united to ruin you with my father; my brother Robert has declared, that he thinks there will be no peace in our family till you are dismissed from it, and told my father he hoped he would not break with his kinsmen rather than give up Edmund.—But what do they lay to my charge? said Edmund.—I cannot rightly understand, answered William, for they make a great mystery of it; something of great consequence, they say; but they will not tell me what; however, my father has told them, that they must bring their accusation before your face, and he will have you answer them publicly. I have been seeking you this hour, to inform you of this, that you might be prepared to defend yourself against your accusers.—God reward you, Sir, said Edmund, for all your goodness to me! I see they are determined to ruin me, if possible: I shall be compelled to leave the castle; but whatever becomes of me, be assured you shall have no cause to blush for your kindness and partiality to your Edmund.—I know it, I am sure of it, said William; and here I swear to you, as Jonathan did to David, I beseech Heaven to bless me, as my friendship to you shall be steady and inviolable!—Only so long as I shall deserve so great a blessing, interrupted Edmund.—I know your worth and honor, continued William; and such is my confidence in your merit, that I firmly believe Heaven designs you for something extraordinary; and I expect that some great and unforeseen event will raise you to the rank and station to which you appear to belong; promise me, therefore, that whatever may be your fate, you will preserve the same friendship for me

that I bear to you.—Edmund was so much affected, that he could not answer but in broken sentences.—Oh, my friend, my master! I vow, I promise, my heart promises! He knelt down with clasped hands and uplifted eyes: William knelt by him, and they invoked the Supreme to witness their friendship, and implored his blessing upon it: they then rose up, and embraced each other, while tears of cordial affection bedewed their cheeks.

As soon as they were able to speak, Edmund conjured his friend not to expose himself to the displeasure of his family, out of kindness to him. I submit to the will of Heaven, said he; I wait with patience its disposal of me: if I leave the castle, I will find means to inform you of my fate and fortunes.—I hope, said William, that things may yet be accommodated; but do not take any resolution; let us act as occasions arise.

In this manner these amiable youths conferred, till they arrived at the castle. The baron was sitting in the great hall, on a high chair, with a footstool before, with the state and dignity of a judge: before him stood Father Oswald, as pleading the cause for himself and Edmund. Round the baron's chair stood his eldest son, and his kinsmen, with their principal domestics. The old servant Joseph, at some distance, with his head leaning forward, as listening with the utmost attention to what passed. Mr. William approached the chair.—My lord, I have found Edmund, and brought him to answer for himself.—You have done well, said the baron. Edmund, come hither: you are charged with some indiscretions, for I cannot properly call them crimes; I am resolved to do justice between you and your accusers; I shall therefore hear you as well as them; for no man ought to be condemned unheard.—My lord, said Edmund, with equal modesty and intrepidity, I demand my trial: if I shall be found guilty of any crimes against my benefactor, let me be punished with the utmost rigor; but if, as I trust, no such charge can be proved against me, I know your goodness too well to doubt that you will do justice to me, as well as to others; and, if it should so happen, that by the misrepresentations of my enemies (who have long sought my ruin privately, and now avow it publicly), if by their artifices your lordship should be induced to think me guilty, I would submit myself to your sentence in silence, and appeal to another tribunal.—See, said Mr. Wenlock, the confidence of the fellow! he already supposes that my lord must be in the wrong if he condemns him; and then this meek creature will appeal to another tribunal: to whose will he appeal? I desire he may be made to explain himself.—That I will immediately, said Edmund, without being compelled: I only mean to appeal to Heaven, that best knows my innocence.—'Tis true, said the baron, and no offence to any one; man can only judge by appearances, but Heaven knows the heart: let every one of you bear this in mind, that you may not bring a false accusation, nor justify yourselves by concealing the truth. Edmund, I am informed that Oswald and you have made very free with me and my family, in some of your conversations; you were heard to censure me for the absurdity of building a new apartment on the west side of the castle, when there was one on the east side uninhabited: Oswald said, that apartment was shut up, because it was haunted: that some shocking murder had been committed there; adding many particulars concerning Lord Lovel's family, such as he could not know the truth of, and, if he had known, was imprudent to reveal. But farther, you complained of ill treatment here; and mentioned an intention to leave the castle, and seek your fortune elsewhere. I shall examine into all these particulars in turn. At present, I desire you, Edmund, to relate all that you can remember of the conversation that passed between you and Oswald in the wood last Monday.—Good God! said Edmund, is it possible that any person could put such a construction upon so innocent a conversation?

Tell me, then, said the baron, the particulars of it.—I will, my lord, as nearly as my memory will allow me. Accordingly he related most of the conversation that passed in the wood; but in the part that concerned the family of Lovel, he abbreviated as much as possible. Oswald's countenance cleared up, for he had done the same before Edmund came. The baron called to his eldest son.—You hear, Sir Robert, what both parties say: I have questioned them separately; neither of them knew what the other would answer, yet their accounts agree almost to a word.—I confess they do so, answered Sir Robert; but, Sir, it is very bold and presuming for them to speak of our family affairs in such a manner: if my uncle, Lord Lovel, should come to know it, he would punish them severely; and if his honor is reflected upon, it becomes us to resent, and to punish it. Here Mr. Wenlock broke out into a passion, and offered to swear to the truth of his accusation. Be silent, Dick, said the baron; I shall judge for myself.—I protest, said he to Sir Robert, I never heard so much as Oswald has now told me, concerning the deaths of the lord and Lady Lovel; I think it is best to let such stories alone, till they die away of themselves. I had, indeed, heard of an idle story of the east apartment's being haunted, when first I came hither, and my brother advised me to shut it up till it should be forgotten; but what has now been said, has suggested a thought that may make that apartment useful in future. I have thought of a punishment for Edmund, that will stop the mouth of his accusers for the present; and, as I hope, will establish his credit with every body. Edmund, will you undertake this adventure for me?—What adventure, my lord? said Edmund: there is nothing I would not undertake to show my gratitude and fidelity to you. As to my courage, I would show that at the expense of my malicious accusers, if respect to my lord's blood did not tie up my hands; as I am situated, I beg it may be put to the proof in whatever way is most for my master's service.—That is well said, cried the baron: as to your enemies, I am thinking how to separate you from

them effectually; of that I shall speak hereafter. I am going to try Edmund's courage; he shall sleep three nights in the east apartment, that he may testify to all, whether it be haunted or not; afterward I will have that apartment set in order, and my eldest son shall take it for his own; it will spare me some expense, and answer my purpose as well, or better; will you consent, Edmund?—With all my heart, my lord, said Edmund, I have not wilfully offended God or man; I have, therefore, nothing to fear.—Brave boy! said my lord; I am not deceived in you, nor shall you be deceived in your reliance on me. You shall sleep in that apartment to-night, and to-morrow I will have some private talk with you. Do you, Oswald, go with me; I want to have some conversation with you. The rest of you retire to your studies and business; I will meet you at dinner.

Edmund retired to his own chamber, and Oswald was shut up with the baron; he defended Edmund's cause and his own, and laid open as much as he knew of the malice and designs of his enemies. The baron expressed much concern at the untimely deaths of Lord and Lady Lovel, and desired Oswald to be circumspect in regard to what he had to say of the circumstances attending them; adding, that he was both innocent and ignorant of any treachery towards either of them. Oswald excused himself for his communications to Edmund, saying, they fell undesignedly into the subject, and that he mentioned it in confidence to him only.

The baron sent orders to the young men to come to dinner; but they refused to meet Edmund at table; accordingly he ate in the steward's apartment. After dinner the baron tried to reconcile his kinsmen to Edmund; but found it impossible. They saw their designs were laid open; and, judging of him by themselves, thought it impossible to forgive or be forgiven. The baron ordered them to keep in separate apartments; he took his eldest son for his companion, as being the most reasonable of the malcontents; and ordered his kinsmen to keep their own apartment, with a servant to watch their motions. Mr. William had Oswald for his companion. Old Joseph was bid to attend on Edmund; to serve him at supper; and, at the hour of nine, to conduct him to the haunted apartment. Edmund desired that he might have a light and his sword, lest his enemies should endeavor to surprise him. The baron thought his request reasonable, and complied with it.

There was a great search to find the key of the apartment; at last it was discovered by Edmund himself, among a parcel of old rusty keys in a lumber room. The baron sent the young men their suppers to their respective apartments. Edmund declined eating, and desired to be conducted to his apartment. He was accompanied by most of the servants to the door of it; they wished him success, and prayed for him as if he had been going to execution.

The door was with great difficulty unlocked, and Joseph gave Edmund a lighted lamp, and wished him a good night; he returned his good wishes to them all with the utmost cheerfulness, took the key on the inside of the door, and then dismissed them.

He then took a survey of his chamber; the furniture, by long neglect, was decayed and dropping to pieces; the bed was devoured by the moths, and occupied by the rats, who had built their nests there with impunity for many generations. The bedding was very damp, for the rain had forced its way through the ceiling; he determined, therefore, to lie down in his clothes. There were two doors on the farther side of the room, with keys in them: being not at all sleepy he resolved to examine them; he attempted one lock, and opened it with ease; he went into a large dining room, the furniture of which was in the same tattered condition; out of this was a large closet with some books in it, and hung round with coats of arms, with genealogies and alliances of the house of Lovel: he amused himself here some minutes, and then returned into the bed-chamber.

He recollected the other door, and resolved to see where it led to; the key was rusted into the lock, and resisted his attempts; he set the lamp on the ground, and exerting all his strength, opened the door, and at the same instant the wind of it blew out the lamp, and left him in utter darkness. At the same moment he heard a hollow rustling noise, like that of a person coming through a narrow passage. Till this moment not one idea of fear had approached the mind of Edmund; but, just then, all the concurrent circumstances of his situation struck upon his heart, and gave him a new and disagreeable sensation. He paused awhile; and, recollecting himself, cried out aloud.—What should I fear? I have not wilfully offended God or man; why then should I doubt protection? But I have not yet implored the Divine assistance; how then can I expect it? Upon this he knelt down and prayed earnestly, resigning himself wholly to the will of Heaven; while he was yet speaking, his courage returned, and he resumed his usual confidence; again he approached the door from whence the noise proceeded; he thought he saw a glimmering light upon a staircase before him. If, said he, this apartment is haunted, I will use my endeavors to discover the cause of it; and if the spirit appears visibly, I will speak to it.

He was preparing to descend the staircase, when he heard several knocks at the door by which he first entered the room; and, stepping backward, the door was clapped to with great violence. Again fear attacked him; but he resisted it, and boldly cried out.—Who is there? A voice at the outer door answered.—It's I; Joseph, your friend.—What do you want? said Edmund.—I have brought you some wood to make a fire, said Joseph.—I thank you kindly, said Edmund; but my lamp is gone out: I will try to find the door, however. After some trouble, he found, and opened it; and was not sorry to see his friend Joseph, with a light in one hand, and a fagot of beer in the other, and a fagot upon his shoulder. —I come, said the good old man, to bring you something to

keep up your spirits; the evening is cold; I know this room wants airing; and beside that, my master, I think your present undertaking requires a little assistance.

My good friend, said Edmund, I never shall be able to deserve or requite your kindness to me.—My dear Sir, you always deserved more than I could do for you; and I think I shall yet live to see you defeat the designs of your enemies, and acknowledge the service of your friends.—Alas! said Edmund, I see little prospect of that.—I see, said Joseph, something that persuades me you are designed for great things; and I perceive that things are working about to some great end. Have courage, my master, my heart beats strangely high upon your account.—You make me smile, said Edmund.—I am glad to see it, Sir; may you smile all the rest of your life!—I thank your honest affection, returned Edmund, though it is too partial to me. You had better go to bed, however; if it is known that you visit me here, it will be bad for us both. So I will presently; but, please God, I will come here again to-morrow night, when all the family are a-bed; and I will tell you some things that you never yet heard.—But pray tell me, said Edmund, where does that door lead to?—Upon a passage that ends in a staircase that leads to the lower rooms; and there is likewise a door out of that passage into the dining room.—And what rooms are there below stairs? said Edmund.—The same as above, replied he.—Very well; then I wish you a good night: we will talk farther to-morrow.—Ay, to-morrow night; and in this place, my dear master.—Why do you call me your master? I never was, nor ever can be, your master.—God only knows that, said the good old man; good night, and Heaven bless you!—Good night, my worthy friend.

Joseph withdrew, and Edmund returned to the other door, and attempted several times to open it in vain; his hands were benumbed and tired: at length he gave over. He made a fire in the chimney, placed the lamp on a table, and opened one of the window-shutters to admit the day-light: he then recommended himself to the Divine protection, and threw himself upon the bed: he presently fell asleep, and continued in that state till the sun saluted him with his orient beams, through the window he had opened.

As soon as he was perfectly awake, he strove to recollect his dreams. He thought that he heard people coming up the staircase that he had a glimpse of; that the door opened, and there entered a warrior leading a lady by the hand, who was young, and beautiful, but pale and wan: the man was dressed in complete armor, and his helmet down. They approached the bed; they undrew the curtains. He thought the man said.—Is this our child? the woman replied.—It is; and the hour approaches that he shall be known for such. They then separated, and one stood on each side of the bed; their hands met over his head, and they gave him a solemn benediction. He strove to rise and pay them his respects, but they forbade him; and the lady said.—Sleep in peace, oh, my Edmund! for those who are the true possessors of this apartment are employed in thy preservation: sleep on, sweet hope of a house that is thought past hope.—Upon this they withdrew, and went out at the same door by which they entered, and he heard them descend the stairs.—After this he followed a funeral as chief mourner; he saw the whole procession, and heard the ceremonies performed. He was snatched away from this mournful scene to one of a contrary kind, a stately feast, at which he presided: and he heard himself congratulated as a husband and a father: his friend William sat by his side; and his happiness was complete. Every succeeding idea was happiness without alloy; and his mind was not idle a moment till the morning sun awakened him. He perfectly remembered his dreams, and meditated on what all these things should portend.—Am I then, said he, not Edmund Twyford, but somebody of consequence, in whose fate so many people are interested? Vain thought, that must have arisen from the partial suggestions of my two friends, Mr. William, and old Joseph.

He lay thus reflecting, when a servant knocked at the door, and told him it was past six o'clock, and that the baron expected him to breakfast in an hour. He rose immediately, paid his tribute of thanks to Heaven for its protection, and went from his chamber in high health and spirits.

He walked in the garden till the hour of breakfast, and then attended the baron.—Good morning, Edmund! said he: how have you rested in your new apartment?—Extremely well, my lord, answered he.—I am glad to hear it, said the baron; but I did not know your accommodations were so bad, as Joseph tells me they are.—'Tis of no consequence, said Edmund; if they were much worse, I could dispense with them for three nights.—Very well, said the baron; you are a brave lad: I am satisfied with you, and will excuse the other two nights.—But, my lord, I will not be excused; no one shall have reason to suspect my courage; I am determined to go through the remaining nights upon many accounts.—That shall be as you please, said my lord. I think of you as you deserve; so well, that I shall ask your advice by and by in some affairs of consequence.—My life and services are yours, my lord: command them freely.—Let Oswald be called in, said my lord; he shall be one of our consultation. He came; the servants were dismissed, and the baron spoke as follows:—Edmund, when first I took you into my family, it was at the request of my sons and kinsmen: I bear witness to your good behavior: you have not deserved to lose their esteem; but, nevertheless, I have observed, for some years past, that all but my son William have set their faces against you: I see their meanness, and I perceive their motives; but they are and must be my relations; and I would rather govern them by love, than fear. I love and esteem your virtues: I cannot give you up to gratify their humors. My son William has lost the affections of the rest, for that he bears to you; but he has increased my regard to him. I think myself bound in honor to him and you to provide for you. I

cannot do it as I wished, under my own roof. If you stay here, I see nothing but confusion in my family; yet I cannot put you out of it disgracefully. I want to think of some way to prefer you, that you may leave this house with honor; and I desire both of you to give me your advice in this matter. If Edmund will tell me in what way I can employ him to his own honor and my advantage, I am ready to do it; let him propose it, and Oswald shall moderate between us.

Here he stopped; and Edmund, whose sighs almost choked him, threw himself at the baron's feet, and wet his hands with his tears. O, my noble, generous benefactor! do you condescend to consult such a one as me upon the state of your family? Does your most amiable and beloved son incur the ill-will of his brothers and kinsmen for my sake? What am I, that I should disturb the peace of this noble family? O, my lord, send me away directly! I should be unworthy to live, if I did not earnestly endeavor to restore your happiness. You have given me a noble education, and I trust I shall not disgrace it. If you will recommend me, and give me a character, I fear not to make my own fortune.—The baron wiped his eyes;—I wish to do this, my child, but in what way?—My lord, said Edmund, I will open my heart to you. I have served with credit in the army, and I should prefer a soldier's life.—You please me well, said the baron: I will send you to France, and give you a recommendation to the regent; he knows you personally, and will prefer you, for my sake, and for your own merit.—My lord, you overwhelm me with your goodness! I am but your creature, and my life shall be devoted to your service.—But, said the baron, how to dispose of you till the spring?—That, said Oswald, may be thought of at leisure; I am glad that you have resolved, and I congratulate you both. The baron put an end to the conversation by desiring Edmund to go with him into the menage, to see his horses. He ordered Oswald to acquaint his son William with all that had passed, and to try to persuade the young men to meet Edmund and William at dinner.

The baron took Edmund with him into his menage to see some horses he had lately purchased. While they were examining the beauties and defects of these noble and useful animals, Edmund declared, that he preferred Caradoc, a horse he had broke himself, to any other in my lord's stables. Then, said the baron, I will give him to you; and you shall go upon him to seek your fortune. He made new acknowledgments for this gift, and declared he would prize it highly for the giver's sake.—But I shall not part with you yet, said my lord; I will first carry all my points with these saucy boys, and oblige them to do you justice.—You have already done that, said Edmund, and I will not suffer any of your lordship's blood to undergo any further humiliation upon my account. I think, with humble submission to your better judgment, the sooner I go hence the better.

While they were speaking, Oswald came to them, and said, that the young men had absolutely refused to dine at the table, if Edmund was present.—'Tis well, said the baron; I shall find a way to punish their contumacy hereafter: I will make them know that I am the master here. Edmund, and you, Oswald, shall spend the day in my apartment above stairs. William shall dine with me alone; and I will acquaint him with our determination: my son Robert, and his cabal, shall be prisoners in the great parlor. Edmund shall, according to his own desire, spend this and the following night in the haunted apartment; and this, for his sake, and my own; for if I should now contradict my former order, it would subject us both to their impertinent reflections.

He then took Oswald aside, and charged him not to let Edmund go out of his sight; for if he should come in the way of those implacable enemies, he trembled for the consequences. He then walked back to the stables, and the two friends returned into the house.

They had a long conversation on various subjects; in the course of it, Edmund acquainted Oswald with all that had passed between him and Joseph the preceding night, the curiosity he had raised in him, and his promise to gratify it the night following.—I wish, said Oswald, you would permit me to be one of your party.—How can that be? said Edmund; we shall be watched, perhaps; and, if discovered, what excuse can you make for coming there? beside, if it were known, I shall be branded with the imputation of cowardice; and though I have borne much, I will not promise to bear that patiently.—Never fear, replied Oswald, I will speak to Joseph about it; and, after prayers are over, and the family gone to bed, I will steal away from my own chamber, and come to you. I am strongly interested in your affairs; and I cannot be easy unless you will receive me into your company: I will bind myself to secrecy in any manner you shall enjoin.—Your word is sufficient, said Edmund; I have as much reason to trust you, father, as any man living; I should be ungrateful to refuse you any thing in my power to grant; but suppose the apartment should really be haunted, would you have resolution enough to pursue the adventure to a discovery?—I hope so, said Oswald: but have you any reason to believe it is?—I have, said Edmund; but I have not opened my lips upon this subject to any creature but yourself. This night I purpose, if Heaven permit, to go all over the rooms; and, though I had formed this design, I will confess that your company will strengthen my resolution. I will have no reserves to you in any respect; but I must put a seal upon your lips. Oswald swore secrecy till he should be permitted to disclose the mysteries of that apartment; and both of them waited, in solemn expectation, the event of the approaching night.

In the afternoon Mr. William was allowed to visit his friend: an affecting interview passed between them: he lamented the necessity of Edmund's departure, and they took a solemn leave of each other, as if they foreboded it would be long ere they should meet again.

About the same hour as the preceding evening, Joseph

came to conduct Edmund to his apartment.—You will find better accommodations than you had last night, said he, and all by my lord's own order.—I every hour receive some new proof of his goodness, said Edmund. When they arrived he found a good fire in the chamber, and a table covered with cold meats, and a flagon of strong beer.—Sit down and get your supper, my dear master, said Joseph: I must attend my lord; but as soon as the family are gone to bed, I will visit you again.—Do so, said Edmund; but first see father Oswald; he has something to say to you: you may trust him, for I have no reserves to him.—Well, Sir, I will see him if you desire it; and I will come to you as soon as possible. So saying, he went his way; and Edmund sat down to supper.

After a moderate refreshment, he kneeled down, and prayed with the greatest fervency; he resigned himself to the disposal of Heaven: I am nothing, said he, I desire to be nothing but what thou, O Lord, pleasest to make me: if it is thy will that I should return to my former obscurity, be it obeyed with cheerfulness; and, if thou art pleased to exalt me, I will look up to thee, as the only fountain of honor and dignity. While he prayed, he felt an enlargement of heart beyond what he had ever experienced before; all idle fears were dispersed, and his heart glowed with Divine love and affiance; he seemed raised above the world and all its pursuits. He continued wrapt up in mental devotion, till a knocking at the door compelled him to rise, and let in his two friends, who came without shoes, and on tiptoe, to visit him.

Save you, my son! said the friar; you look cheerful and happy.—I am so, father, said Edmund; I have resigned myself to the disposal of Heaven, and I find my heart strengthened above what I can express.—Heaven be praised! said Oswald: I believe you are designed for great things, my son.—What! do you too encourage my ambition? says Edmund; strange concurrence of circumstances! Sit down, my friends; and do you, my good Joseph, tell me the particulars you promised me last night. They drew their chairs round the fire, and Joseph began as follows:—

You have heard of the unimaged death of the late Lord Lovel, my noble and worthy master; perhaps you may have also heard, that, from that time, this apartment was haunted. What passed the other day, when my lord questioned you both on this head, brought all the circumstances fresh into my mind. You then said, there were suspicions that he came not fairly to his end. I trust you both, and will speak what I know of it. There was a person suspected of this murder; and who do you think it was?—You must speak out, said Oswald.—Why then, said Joseph, it was the present Lord Lovel.—You speak my thoughts, said Oswald; but proceed to the proofs.—I will, said Joseph. From the time that my lord's death was reported, there were strange whisperings and consultations between the new lord and some of the servants; there was a deal of private business carried on in this apartment: soon after, they gave out that my poor lady was distracted; but she threw out strong expressions that savored nothing of madness: she said that the ghost of her departed lord had appeared to her, and revealed the circumstances of this murder. None of the servants, but one, were permitted to see her. At this very time Sir Walter, the new lord, had the cruelty to offer love to her; he urged her to marry him; and one of her women overheard her say, she would sooner die than give her hand to the man who caused the death of her lord: soon after this we were told my lady was dead. The Lord Lovel made a public and sumptuous funeral for her.—That is true, said Oswald; for I was a novice, and assisted at it.

Well, says Joseph, now comes my part of the story. As I was coming home from the burial, I overtook Roger our ploughman. What think you of this burying?—What should I think? said I, but we have lost the best master and lady that we shall ever know?—God he knows, quoth Roger, whether they be living or dead; but if ever I saw my lady in my life, I saw her alive the night they say she died. I tried to convince him that he was mistaken; but he offered to take his oath, that the night they said she died, he saw her come out at the garden-gate, into the fields; that she often stopped, like a person in pain, and then went forward again, until he had lost sight of her. Now it is certain that her time was out, and she expected to lie down every day; and they did not pretend that she died in childbirth. I thought upon what I heard; but nothing I said. Roger told the same story to another servant; so he was called to an account; the story was hushed up, and the foolish fellow said, he was verily persuaded it was her ghost that he saw. Now you must take notice that, from this time, they began to talk about, that this apartment was troubled; and not only this, but at last the new lord could not sleep in quiet in his own room; and this induced him to sell the castle to his brother-in-law, and get out of this country as fast as possible. He took most of the servants away with him, and Roger among the rest. As for me, they thought I knew nothing, and so they left me behind; but I was neither blind nor deaf, though I could hear, and see, and say nothing.

This is a dark story, said Oswald.—It is so, said Edmund; but why should Joseph think it concerns me in particular?—Ah, dear Sir, said Joseph, I must tell you, though I never uttered it to mortal man before; the striking resemblance this young man bears to my dear lord, the strange dislike his reputed father took to him, his gentle manners, his generous heart, his noble qualities, so uncommon in those of his birth and breeding, the sound of his voice.—You may smile at the strength of my fancy, but I cannot put it out of my mind but that he is my own master's son.

At these words Edmund changed color, and trembled; he clasped his hand upon his breast, and looked up to Heaven in silence; his dream recurred to his memory, and struck up-

on his heart. He related it to his attentive auditors.—The ways of Providence are wonderful, said Oswald. If this be so, Heaven in its own time will make it appear.

Here a silence of several minutes ensued; when, suddenly, they were awakened from their reverie by a violent noise in the rooms underneath them. It seemed like the clashing of arms, and something seemed to fall down with violence.

They started, and Edmund rose up with a look full of resolution and intrepidity.—I am called, said he; I obey the call! He took up a lamp, and went to the door that he had opened the night before. Oswald followed with his rosary in his hand, and Joseph last, with trembling steps. The door opened with ease, and they descended the stairs in profound silence.

The lower rooms answered exactly to those above: there were two parlors and a large closet. They saw nothing remarkable in these rooms, except two pictures, that were turned with their faces to the wall. Joseph took the courage to turn them:—These, said he, are the portraits of my lord and lady. Father, look at this face; do you know who is like it?—I should think, said Oswald, it was done for Edmund!—I am, said Edmund, struck with the resemblance myself; but let us go on: I feel myself inspired with unusual courage. Let us open the closet-door. Oswald stopped him short:—Take heed, said he, lest the wind of the door put out the lamp. I will open this door. He attempted it, without success; Joseph did the same, but to no purpose; Edmund gave the lamp to Joseph; he approached the door, tried the key, and it gave way to his hand in a moment.—This adventure belongs, said he, to me only, that is plain; bring the lamp forward. Oswald repeated his paternoster, in which they all joined, and then entered the closet.

The first thing that presented itself to their view, was a complete suit of armor, that seemed to have fallen down on a heap.—Behold! said Edmund; this made the noise we heard above. They took it up, and examined it piece by piece: the inside of the breast-plate was stained with blood.—See here! said Edmund; what think you of this?—Tis my lord's armor, said Joseph; I know it well: here has been bloody work in this closet! Going forward he stumbled over something; it was a ring, with the arms of Lovel engraved upon it.—This is my lord's ring, said Joseph; I have seen him wear it: I give it to you, sir, as the right owner; and most religiously do I believe you his son.—Heaven only knows that, said Edmund; and, if it permits, I will know who was my father before I am a day older. While he was speaking he shifted his ground, and perceived that the boards rose up on the other side of the closet; upon further examination, they found that the whole floor was loose, and a table that stood over them concealed the circumstance from a casual observer.—I perceive, said Oswald, that some great discovery is at hand.—God defend us! said Edmund; but I verily believe that the person that owned this armor lies buried under us. Upon this, a dismal hollow groan was heard, as if from underneath. A solemn silence ensued, and marks of fear were visible upon all three; the groan was thrice heard: Oswald made signs for them to kneel, and he prayed audibly, that Heaven would direct them how to act; he also prayed for the soul of the departed, that it might rest in peace. After this he arose; but Edmund continued kneeling: he vowed solemnly to devote himself to the discovery of this secret, and the avenging the death of the person there buried. He then rose up.—It would be to no purpose, said he, for us to examine farther now; when I am properly authorized, I will have this place opened: I trust that time is not far off.—I believe it, said Oswald: you are designed by Heaven to be its instrument in bringing this deed of darkness to light. We are your creatures; only tell us what you would have us do, and we are ready to obey your commands.—I only demand your silence, said Edmund, till I call for your evidence; and then you must speak all you know, and all you suspect.—O, said Joseph, that I may but live to see that day, and I shall have lived long enough!—Come, said Edmund, let us return up stairs, and we will consult farther how I shall proceed; so saying, he went out of the closet, and they followed him. He locked the door, and took the key out:—I will keep this, said he, till I have power to use it to purpose, lest any one should presume to pry into the secret of this closet. I will always carry it about me, to remind me of what I have undertaken.

Upon this they returned up stairs into the bed-chamber; all was still, and they heard nothing more to disturb them.—How, said Edmund, is it possible that I should be the son of Lord Lovel? for, however circumstances have seemed to encourage such a notion, what reason have I to believe it?—I am strangely puzzled about it, said Oswald. It seems unlikely that so good a man as Lord Lovel should corrupt the wife of a peasant, his vassal; and, especially being so lately married to a lady with whom he was passionately in love.—Hold there! said Joseph; my lord was incapable of such an action: if master Edmund is the son of my lord, he is also the son of my lady.—How can that be? said Edmund.—I don't know how, said Joseph; but there is a person who can tell if she will: I mean Margaret Twyford, who calls herself your mother.—You meet my thoughts, said Edmund; I had resolved before you spoke to visit her, and to interrogate her on the subject: I will ask my lord's permission to go this very day.—That is right, said Oswald; but be cautious and prudent in your inquiries.—If you, said Edmund, would bear me company, I should do better: she might think herself obliged to answer your questions; and, being less interested in the event, you would be more discreet in your interrogations.—That I will most readily, said he; and I will ask my lord's permission for us both.—This point is well determined, said Joseph; I am impatient for the result; and I believe my feet will carry me to meet you whether I consent or not.—I am as impatient as you, said Oswald; but let us

be silent as the grave, and let not a word or look indicate any thing unknown or mysterious.

The daylight began to dawn upon their conference; and Edmund observing it, begged his friends to withdraw in silence. They did so, and left Edmund to his own recollections. His thoughts were too much employed for sleep to approach him; he threw himself upon the bed, and lay meditating how he should proceed; a thousand schemes offered themselves, and were rejected; but he resolved at all events to leave Baron Fitz-Owen's family the first opportunity that presented itself.

He was summoned, as before, to attend my lord at breakfast; during which he was silent, absent, and reserved. My lord observed it, and rallied him; inquiring how he had spent the night?—In reflecting upon my situation, my lord; and in laying plans for my future conduct. Oswald took the hint, and asked permission to visit Edmund's mother in his company, and acquaint her with his intentions of leaving the country soon. He consented freely, but seemed unresolved about Edmund's departure.

They set out directly, and Edmund went hastily to old Twyford's cottage, declaring that every field seemed a mile to him.—Restrain your warmth, my son, said Oswald: compose your mind, and recover your breath, before you enter upon a business of such consequence. Margery met them at the door, and asked Edmund what wind blew them thither?—Is it so very surprising, said he, that I should visit my parents?—Yes, it is, said she, considering the treatment you have met with from us; but since Andrew is not in the house, I may say I am glad to see you: Lord bless you, what a fine youth you be grown! 'Tis a long time since I saw you; but that is not my fault: many a cross word, and many a blow, have I had on your account: but I may now venture to embrace my dear child. Edmund came forward, and embraced her fervently; the starting tears, on both sides, evinced their affection.—And why, said he, should my father forbid you to embrace your child? what have I ever done to deserve his hatred?—Nothing, my dear boy! you were always good and tender-hearted, and deserved the love of every body.—It is not common, said Edmund, for a parent to hate his first-born son without his having deserved it.—This is true, said Oswald; it is uncommon, it is unnatural; nay, I am of opinion it is almost impossible. I am so convinced of this truth, that I believe the man who thus hates and abuses Edmund cannot be his father. In saying this, he observed her countenance attentively; she changed color apparently. Come, said he, let us sit down; and do you, Margery, answer to what I have said.—Blessed Virgin! said Margery, what does your reverence mean? what do you suspect?—I suspect, said he, that Edmund is not the son of Andrew your husband.—Lord bless me! said she, what is it you do suspect?—Do not evade my question, woman! I am come here by authority to examine you upon this point. The woman trembled every joint:—Would to Heaven, said she, that Andrew was at home!—It is much better as it is, said Oswald: you are the person we are to examine.—O, father, said she, do you think that I—that I—that I am to blame in this matter? what have I done?—Do you, Sir, said she, ask your own questions. Upon this Edmund threw himself at her feet, and embraced her knees.—Oh, my mother! said he, for as such my heart owns you, tell me, for the love of Heaven! tell me, who was my father?—Gracious heaven, said she, what will become of me?—Woman! said Oswald, confess the truth, or you shall be compelled to do it by whom had you this youth?—Who, I? said she; I had him! No, father, I am not guilty of the black crime of adultery; God, he knows my innocence: I am not worthy to be the mother of such a sweet youth as that is.—You are not his mother, then, nor Andrew his father?—O what shall I do? said Margery, Andrew will be the death of me!—No, he shall not, said Edmund; you shall be protected and rewarded for the discovery.—Goody, said Oswald, confess the whole truth, and I will protect you from harm and from blame: you may be the means of making Edmund's fortune, in which case he will certainly provide for you: on the other hand, by an obstinate silence, you will deprive yourself of all advantages you might receive from the discovery; and, beside, you will soon be examined in a different manner, and be obliged to confess all you know, and nobody will thank you for it.—Ah! said she, but Andrew beat me the last time I spoke to Edmund; and told me he would break every bone in my skin, if ever I spoke to him again.—He knows it then? said Oswald.—He knows it! Lord help you, it was all his own doing.—Tell us then, said Oswald; for Andrew shall never know it, till it is out of his power to punish you.—'Tis a long story, said she, and cannot be told in a few words.—It will never be told at this rate, said he; sit down and begin it instantly.—My fate depends upon your words, said Edmund; my soul is impatient of the suspense! If ever you loved me, and cherished me, show it now, and tell while I have breath to ask it.

He sat in extreme agitation of mind; his words and actions were equally expressive of his inward emotions. I will, said she; but I must try to recollect all the circumstances. You must know, young man, that you are just one-and-twenty years of age.—On what day was he born? said Oswald.—The day before yesterday, said she; the 21st of September.—A remarkable era, said he.—'Tis so, indeed, said Edmund; oh, that night! that apartment!—Be silent, said Oswald; and do you, Margery, begin your story. I will, said she. Just one-and-twenty years ago, on that very day, I lost my first-born son: I got a hurt by overreaching myself, when I was near my time, and so the poor child died. And so, as I was sitting all alone, and very melancholy, Andrew came home from work: See, Margery, said he, I have brought you a child instead of that you have lost.—So he gave me a bundle, as I thought; but sure

enough it was a child: a poor helpless babe, just born, and only rolled up in a fine handkerchief, and over that a rich velvet cloak, trimmed with gold lace. And where did you find this? said I.—Upon the foot-bridge, said he, just below the clay field. This child, said he, belongs to some great folk, and perhaps it may be inquired after one day, and may make our fortunes; take care of it, said he, and bring it up as if it was your own. The poor infant was cold, and it cried, and looked up at me so pitifully, that I loved it; beside, my milk was troublesome to me, and I was glad to be eased of it: so I gave it the breast, and from that hour I loved the child as if it were my own, and so I do still, if I dared to own it.—And this is all you know of Edmund's birth? said Oswald.—No, not all, said Margery; but pray look out and see whether Andrew is coming, for I am all over in a twitter.—He is not, said Oswald; go on, I beseech you.—This happened, said she, as I told you, on the 21st. On the morrow, my Andrew went out early to work, along with one Robin Rouse, our neighbor; they had not been gone above an hour when they both came back, seemingly very much frightened: says Andrew, Go you, Robin, and borrow a pick-axe at neighbor Styles's.—What is the matter now? said I.—Matter enough! quoth Andrew; we may come to be hanged, perhaps, as many an innocent man has before us.—Tell me, what is the matter? said I.—I will, said he; but if ever you open your mouth about it, we be to you—I never will, said I: but he made me swear by all the blessed saints in the calendar; and then he told me, that as Robin and he were going over the foot-bridge, where he found the child the evening before, they saw something floating upon the water; so they followed it, till it stuck against a stake, and found it to be the dead body of a woman; as sure as you are alive, Madge, said he, this was the mother of the child I brought home.—Merciful God! said Edmund; am I the child of that hapless mother?—Be composed, said Oswald: proceed, good woman, the time is precious.—And so, continued she, Andrew told me they dragged the body out of the river, and it was richly dressed, and must be somebody of consequence. I suppose, said he, when the poor lady had taken care of her child, she went to find some help; and the night being dark, her foot slipped, and she fell into the river, and was drowned.

Lord have mercy! said Robin, what shall we do with the dead body? we may be taken up for the murder; what had we to do to meddle with it?—Aye, but, says Andrew, we must have something to do with it now; and our wisest way is to bury it. Robin was sadly frightened, but at last they agreed to carry it into the wood, and bury it there: so they came home for a pick-axe and shovel.—Well, said I, Andrew, but will you bury all the rich clothes you speak of?—Why, said he, it would be both a sin and a shame to strip the dead. So it would, said I; but I will give you a sheet to wrap the body in, and you may take off her upper garments, and any thing of value; but not strip her to the skin for any thing.—Well said, wench! said he; I will do as you say. So I fetched a sheet, and by that time Robin was come back, and away they went together.

They did not come back again till noon, and then they sat down and ate a morsel together. Says Andrew—Now we may sit down and eat in peace.—Aye, says Robin, and sleep in peace too, for we have done no harm.—No, to be sure, said I; but yet I am much concerned that the poor lady had not Christian burial.—Never trouble yourself about that, said Andrew; we have done the best we could for her; but let us see what we have got in our bags; we must divide them. So they opened their bags, and took out a fine gown, and a pair of rich shoes; but, beside these, there was a fine necklace with a golden locket, and a pair of earrings. Says Andrew, and winked at me, I will have these, and you may take the rest. Robin said he was satisfied, and so went his way. When he was gone.—Here, you fool, says Andrew, take these, and keep them as safe as the bud of your eye: if ever young master is found, these will make our fortune.—And have you them now? said Oswald.—Yes, that I have, answered she: Andrew would have sold them long ago, but I always put him off it.—Heaven be praised! said Edmund.—Hush, said Oswald, let us not lose time; proceed, Goody.—Nay, said Margery, I have not much more to say. We looked every day to hear some inquiries after the child, but nothing passed, nobody was missing.—Did nobody of note die about that time? said Oswald.—Why yes, said Margery, the widow Lady Lovel died that same week; by the same token, Andrew went to the funeral, and brought home a scutcheon, which I keep unto this day.—Very well; go on.—My husband behaved well enough to the boy, till such time as he had two or three children of his own, and then he began to grumble, and say, it was hard to maintain other folks' children, when he found it hard enough to keep his own; I loved the boy quite as well as my own: often and often have I pacified Andrew, and made him to hope that we should one day or other be paid for his trouble; but at last he grew out of all patience, and gave over all hopes of that kind.

As Edmund grew up, he grew sickly and tender, and could not bear hard labor; and that was another reason why my husband could not bear with him. If, quoth he, the boy could earn his living, I did not care; but I must bear all the expense. There came an old pilgrim into our parts; he was a scholar, and had been a soldier, and he taught Edmund to read; then he told him histories of wars, and knights, and lords, and great men; and Edmund took such delight in hearing him, that he would not take to any thing else.

To be sure Edmund was a pleasant companion; he would tell old stories, and sing old songs, that one could have sat all night to hear him; but, as I was saying, Edmund grew more and more fond of reading, and less of work; however, he would run of errands, and do many handy turns for the neighbors; and he was so courteous a lad, that people took notice of him. Andrew once caught him alone reading, and then

told him, that if he did not find some way to earn his bread, he would turn him out of doors in a very short time; and so he would have done, sure enough, if the lord Fitz-Owen had not taken him into his service just in the nick.

Very well, Goody, said Oswald, you have told your story very well; I am glad, for Edmund's sake, that you can do so properly; but now, can you keep a secret?—Why, an't please your reverence, I think I have showed you that I can.—But can you keep it from your husband?—Aye, said she, surely I can; for I dare not tell it him.—That is a good security, said he, but I must have a better. You must swear upon this book, not to disclose any thing that has passed between us three, till we desire you to do it. Be assured you will soon be called upon for this purpose: Edmund's birth is near to the discovery; he is the son of parents of high degree; and it will be in his power to make your fortune, when he takes possession of his own.

Holy Virgin! what is it you tell me? How you rejoice me to hear that what I have so long prayed for, will come to pass! She took the oath required, saying after Oswald.—Now, said he, go and fetch the tokens you have mentioned.

When she was gone, Edmund's passions, long suppressed, broke out in tears and exclamations; he knelt down, and, with his hands clasped together, returned thanks to Heaven for the discovery. Oswald begged him to be composed, lest Margery should perceive his agitation, and misconstrue the cause. She soon returned with the necklace and earrings: they were pearls of great value; and the necklace had a locket, on which the cypher of Lovel was engraved.—This, said Oswald, is indeed a proof of consequence; keep it, sir, for it belongs to you.—Must he take it away? said she.—Certainly, returned Oswald; we can do nothing without it; but if Andrew should ask for it, you must put him off for the present, and hereafter he will find his account in it. Margery consented reluctantly to part with the jewels; and, after some further conversation, they took leave of her.

Edmund embraced her affectionately.—I thank you with my whole heart, said he, for all your goodness to me! Though I confess, I never felt much regard for your husband, yet for you I had always the tender affection of a son. You will, I trust, give your evidence in my behalf when called upon; and I hope it will one day be in my power to reward your kindness: in that case I will own you as my foster-mother, and you shall always be treated as such. Margery wept.—The Lord grant it! said she, and I pray him to have you in his holy keeping. Farewell, my dear child! Oswald desired them to separate for fear of intrusion; and they returned to the castle. Margery stood at the door of her cottage, looking every way to see if the coast was clear.

Now, Sir, said Oswald, I congratulate you as the son of Lord and Lady Lovel; the proofs are strong and indisputable.—To us they are so, said Edmund; but how shall we make them so to others; and what are we to think of the funeral of Lady Lovel?—As of a fiction, said Oswald; the work of the present lord, to secure his title and fortune.—And what means can we use to dispossess him? said Edmund: is not a man for a poor youth like me to contend with?—Doubt not, said Oswald, but Heaven, who has evidently conducted you by the hand thus far, will complete its own work: for my part I am only wonder and adore!—Give me your advice then, said Edmund; for Heaven assists us by natural means.

It seems to me, said Oswald, that your first step must be to make a friend of some great man, of consequence enough to espouse your cause, and to get this affair examined into by authority. Edmund started and crossed himself; he suddenly exclaimed—A friend! yes; I have a friend! a powerful one too, one sent by Heaven to be my protector, but whom I have too long neglected.—Who can that be? said Oswald. Who should it be, said Edmund, but that good Sir Philip Harclay, the chosen friend of him, whom I shall henceforward call my father?—'Tis true, indeed, said Oswald; and this is a fresh proof of what I before observed, that Heaven assists us, and will complete its own work.—I think so myself, said Edmund, and rely upon its direction. I have already determined on my future conduct, which I will communicate to you. My first step shall be to leave the castle. My lord has this day given me a horse, upon which I propose to set out this very night, without the knowledge of any of the family. I will go to Sir Philip Harclay; I will throw myself at his feet, relate my strange story, and implore his protection: with him I will consult on the most proper way of bringing this murderer to public justice; and I will be guided by his advice and direction in every thing.—Nothing can be better, said Oswald, than what you propose; but give me leave to offer an addition to your scheme. You shall set off in the dead of night, as you intend; Joseph and I will favor your departure in such a manner as to throw a mystery over the circumstances of it: your disappearing at such a time from the haunted apartment will terrify and confound all the family; they will puzzle themselves in vain to account for it, and they will be afraid to pry into the secrets of that place.

You say well, and I approve your addition, replied Edmund. Suppose, likewise, there was a letter written in a mysterious manner, and dropped in my lord's way, or sent to him afterward: it would forward our design, and frighten them away from that apartment.—That shall be my care, said Oswald; and I will warrant you that they will not find themselves disposed to inhabit it presently.—But how shall I leave my dear friend Mr. William, without a word of notice of this separation?—I have thought of that too, said Oswald; and I will so manage as to acquaint him with it, in such a manner as he shall think out of the common course of things, and which shall make him wonder and be silent.—How will you do that? said Edmund.—I will tell you hereafter, said Oswald; for here comes old Joseph to meet us.